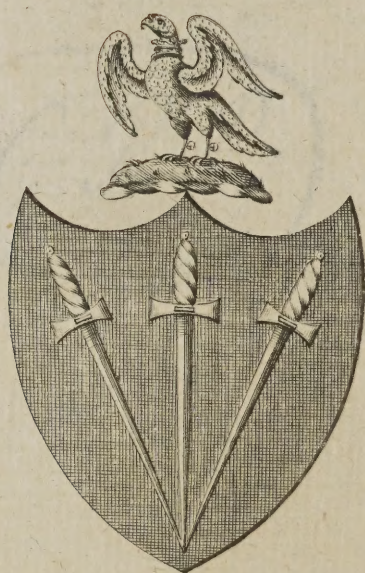


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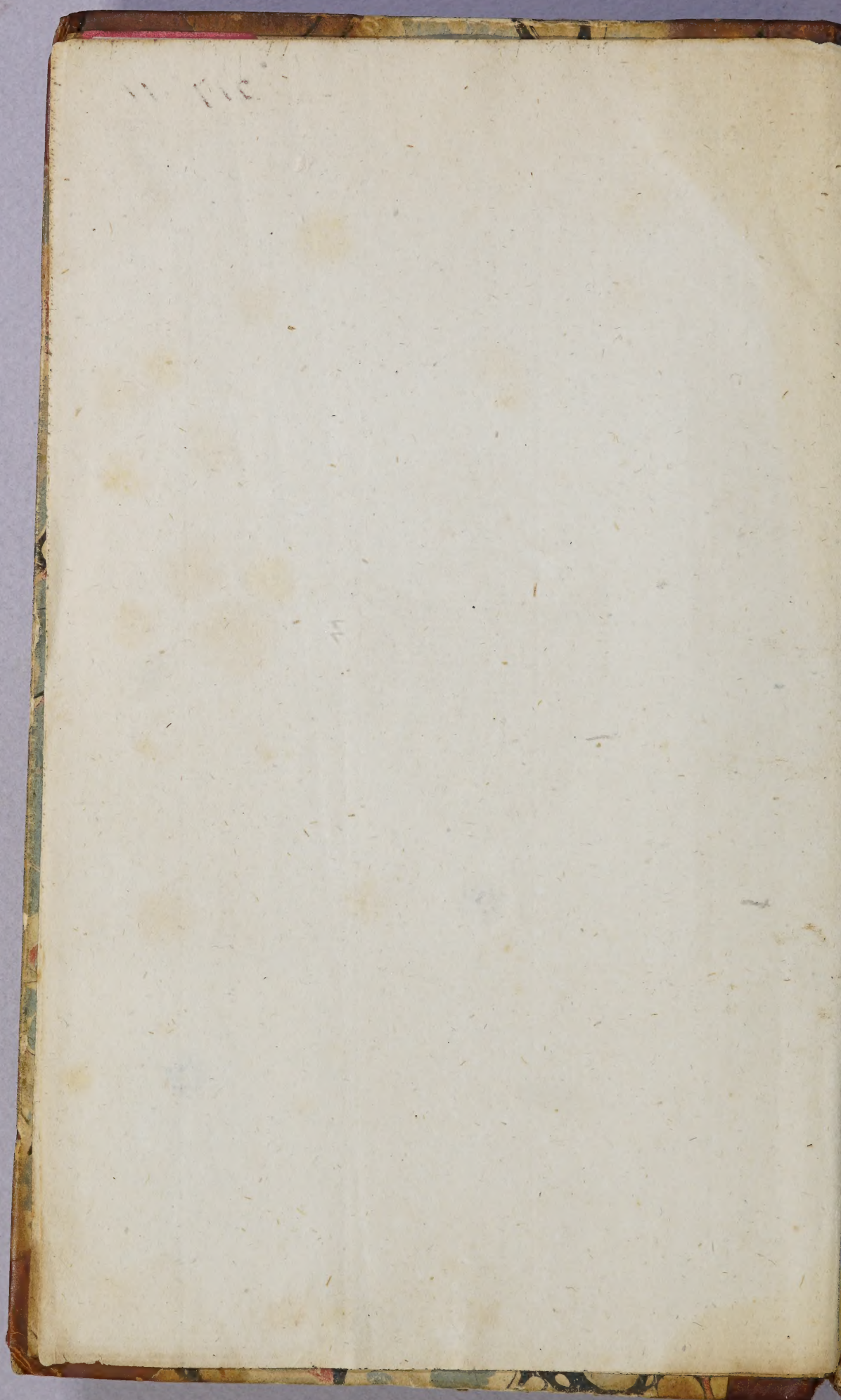


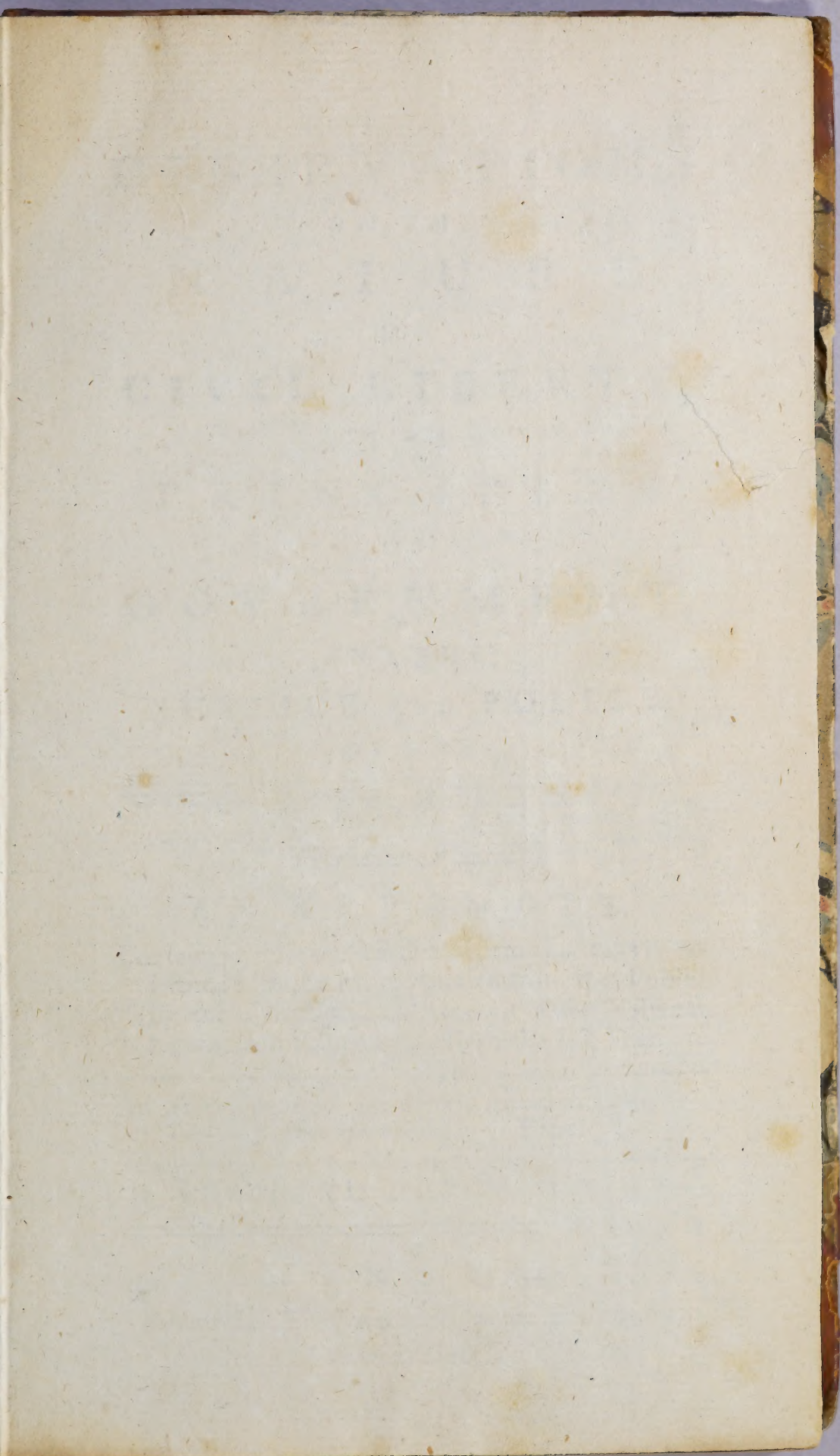
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AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
UNITED STATES
OF
NORTH AMERICA.

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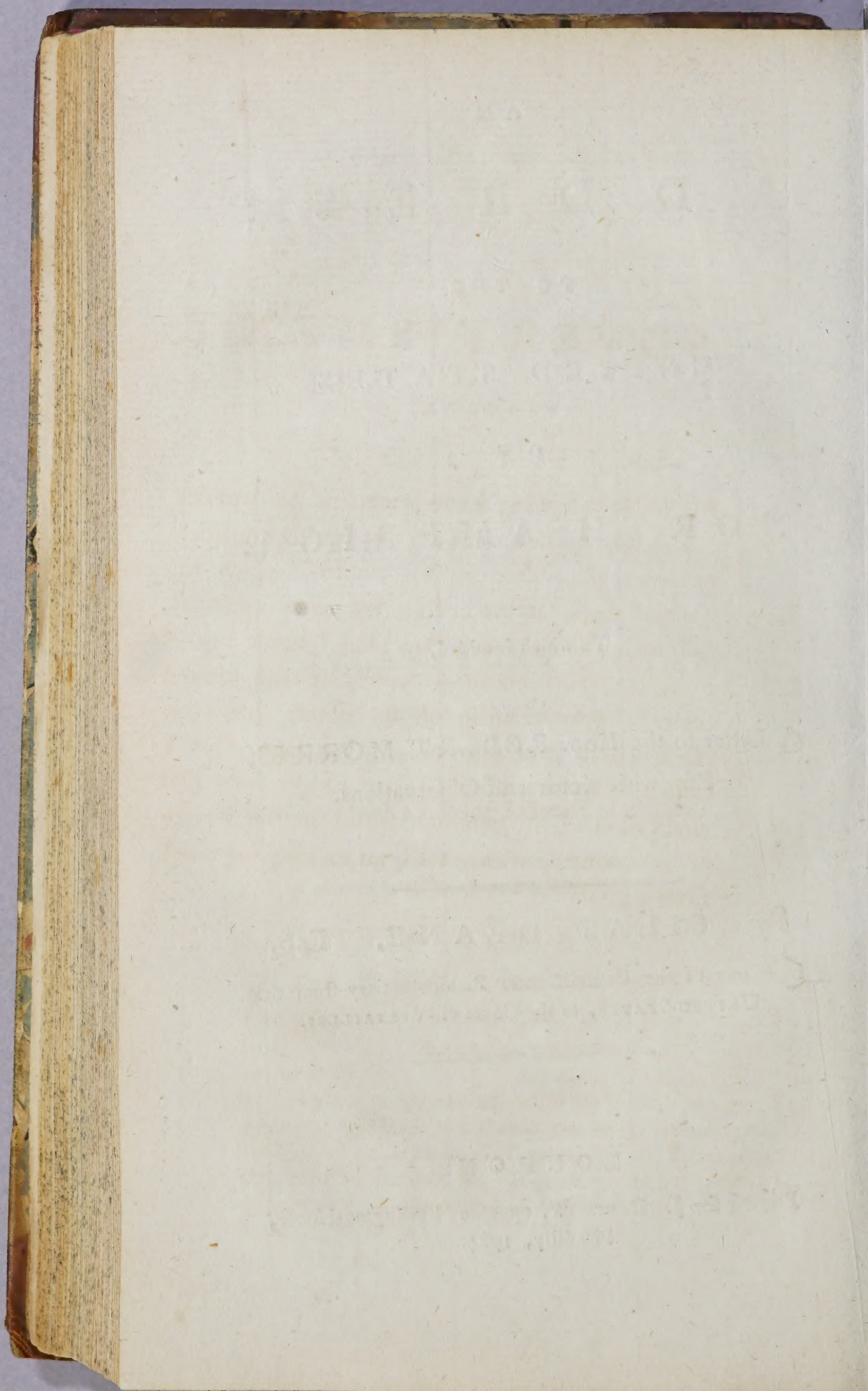
A Letter to the Hon. ROBERT MORRIS,
Esq. with Notes and Observations.

By SILAS DEANE, Esq.

Late one of the Commissioners Plenipotentiary from the
UNITED STATES, to the Court of VERSAILLES.

LONDON:

Printed for J. DEBENT, opposite Burlington-House,
Picadilly, 1784.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Address was sent to America, within a few days after its date, with orders to have it published, but for reasons, which the circumstances, and temper of the times suggested, the publication was deferred, and I know not if it has as yet been made public in the United States; but my silence, on this subject, has been construed so much to my disadvantage, that I cannot in justice to myself, any longer delay that vindication of my conduct, whilst in the service of my country, which has been so long expected from me.

ADVENTIS

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been admitted to the Society of Friends since the last meeting of the Yearly Meeting, held at Philadelphia, in the month of December, 1844.

At the Yearly Meeting, held at Philadelphia, in the month of December, 1844, the following persons were admitted to the Society of Friends:

At the Yearly Meeting, held at Philadelphia, in the month of December, 1844, the following persons were admitted to the Society of Friends:

TO THE
Free and Independant Citizens
OF THE
UNITED STATES
OF
NORTH AMERICA.

Friends, and Fellow Citizens,

THE happy period being arrived, in which we may, in peace, take a review of the scenes through which we have passed, and with calmness and impartiality examine and judge of past transactions, I am encouraged to come forward, and to address you on a subject of infinite importance to myself, and of so much to you, as to excuse me from the making any previous apology on the occasion ;—perhaps I ought rather to make one, for my having been so long silent, under the many heavy charges brought against me, in the public papers, in America.—Neither a want of sufficient means to refute them, or any indif-

B

ference

ference as to the opinion of my countrymen, occasioned my silence ; but the reflection, that during the rage and violence of war, and whilst party prejudices, heats and jealousies, were in their full force, it was by no means the time for a cool and dispassionate discussion of any subject, on which, appearances had already prejudiced the minds of the public.

I therefore resolved to wait, and to improve the first moment of public peace and tranquility, to appear, and to plead my cause at your bar ; during near three years of misfortunes, and exile, I have impatiently looked for it ; I now flatter myself that it is arrived, and in that confidence, venture to call your attention to my case. It is of some importance to you to know, if one, who formerly had your confidence to a great degree, actually betrayed, and deserted you, and was guilty of the frauds, speculation, and treachery, with which he has been charged ; or if artful, and designing men, inimical to him, have taken the advantage of his weakness, or imprudence, to charge him, with those enormous crimes, to excite a general clamour against him, and from his silence, to infer, in the strongest manner, his guilt. Though I may solicit your examination of the subject at this time, under very great disadvantages, yet I am by no means thereby deterred, from doing it. As yet you have heard but one side of the question, and that at a time
when

when your situation made you justly apprehensive, and jealous of danger from every quarter, and rendered you, as it were, feelingly alive in every pore. At present, when we are happily freed from the alarms, and dangers of war, you will not refuse to hear the other part, and thereby become capable of judging on the whole with certainty, and with justice, to the accuser, as well as to the accused, which is all I ask, or wish for. Unwilling to take up more of your time, than what is absolutely necessary, I shall not, in this address, recapitulate the many surmises, and insinuations thrown out by my enemies, in the course of their persecuting of me, but confine myself to their direct charges, all of which, are comprehended under two heads: First, That I was guilty of fraud, and speculation, in the management of the public monies committed to my care; and Secondly, That after my return to France, in 1781, I wrote those letters, which were intercepted, and published in New-York, from interested motives, and with a base and treacherous design, to injure my country, having previously engaged myself, in the interest of her enemies. If on an impartial examination of facts, you shall judge me guilty of these crimes, nothing that has hitherto been said, or done against me, will be deemed unjust, or too severe; but if, on the other hand, you shall, from the most unquestionable facts and circumstances, find those charges to be false and

groundless, whatever weakness or imprudence you may find me justly chargeable with, you will, at least, acquit me of any thing criminal, and pronounce me to be, *a man more sinned against than sinning*. My conduct in the early part of the late contest, and until my leaving America in April, 1776, to go for France, in the character of commercial and political agent, and commissioner for the United States, is too well known, to require my referring to any part of it. The charges against me, originate, after that period; previous to it, I had no charge of public monies.

I arrived in France in June, 1776, and acted as sole commercial and political agent, for the United States until the month of December following, when I received a commission from Congress, appointing Doctor Franklin, Mr. Lee, and myself, their joint commissioners plenipotentiary. And I continued to act in this last character, until the first of April, 1778, when, in obedience to the orders of Congress, I left Paris on my return to America, and from that period to the present hour, have not been entrusted with the monies of the public, or with any public employ. It therefore follows, that if frauds, speculation, and embezzlement, were practised, and committed by me, they must have been, in and during that period, that is between April, 1776, and April, 1778;—and that I must have committed them, in my transactions at
Paris,

Paris, where I constantly resided. The time and place being ascertained, the justice or injustice of this charge, will at once be seen, by an examination of my receipts, and disbursements of public monies. On the 4th of March, 1778, I received a positive order from Congress, to return immediately to America, to acquaint them *with the state of their affairs in Europe*; in the resolution of Congress transmitted, and in the letter accompanying of it, this appeared to be the only motive, and object of my recall.

Though the treaties with France, had been concluded and signed on the 6th of February preceding, yet they had still been kept secret, and, by agreement with the Court of France, were not to be made public in Europe, until intelligence should be received of their being arrived, and published in America; but several circumstances concurred at that time, to induce the Court of France, to change their plan, and publicly to announce to the Court of London, their having entered into treaties of commerce, and alliance with the United States, and to dispatch with all possible secrecy, and expedition, the fleet then at Toulon to America, under the command of the Count d'Estaing; and the Count de Vergennes and Doctor Franklin joined in advising me, to keep my recall, and my intention to return, secret, until the fleet should sail, in which it was proposed that I should embark.

At

At this time, most of the contracts for stores, arms, cloathing, &c. and for ships to transport them to America, were compleated; the execution of those contracts had been principally under my direction, but though monies had been advanced on all of them, the accounts of the contractors, had not been brought in for settlement, and it was impossible for me, (if I literally complied with the order of Congress, and with the urgent request of the French Minister, and of Dr. Franklin, to go out in the fleet;) to do any thing previously, towards the calling in and settling the public, or even my private accounts; any attempt that way, would have defeated the secrecy, and dispatch enjoined me. Though nothing appeared in the order of Congress, or in any of their letters, which intimated the least dissatisfaction with my conduct, or any suspicion of the faithful management, and application of the public monies, yet as I had, from the first, the misfortune, to have in Mr. Lee, one of my colleagues, a most jealous, and artful enemy, and sensible that many ill offices, had been done me in America, I was extremely desirous to put off my return, until all the transactions, in which I had had any concern, for the public, should be settled and closed: but finally, I submitted, to the advice of Count De Vergennes, and of Doctor Franklin, and contented myself, with taking from Mr. Grand,

Grand, the Banker for Congress, an accompt of all the monies received, or paid out, on accompt of the United States, up to that time, this was all that was in my power to do ; and as Mr. Grand, had mentioned in this accompt, the names of all the persons to whom he had paid the money, and as I carried out with me, the most-honorable testimonials *, from his most Christian Majesty, from his Minister, and from my colleague and intimate friend, Dr. Franklin, of my zeal and integrity in the service of my country, I had no reason to apprehend the being censured for not having settled, and brought out with me all the public accompts, and their vouchers, in detail ; but on my arrival in Philadelphia, I soon found that my enemies ; had been to a certain degree successful, in poisoning the minds of the public, by insinuating that I had become immensely rich, in their service, and consequently, that I must have been guilty of undue, and dishonest practices ; and though I had been sent for, expressly to inform Congress, of the state of their affairs in Europe, and notwithstanding the honorable characters I had sustained, as their political and commercial Agent, and afterwards as one of their Commissioners Plenipotentiaries, I could not obtain an audience of that body, until after six weeks attendance and solicitation.

* See Appendix, No. 1, 2, 3.

I then

I then gave them, verbally, a faithful detail of the state of their affairs in Europe, and laid before them Mr. Grand's accompt, of the receipts and payments of monies, to the time of my leaving Paris; and requested, that if there had been any charge, or insinuation against me, for mismanagement or neglect, that I might be informed of it, and be permitted to be heard in my defence. I was not told of any; and though Congress appeared no ways dissatisfied with the account I then gave them of the state of their affairs in Europe, and of my own conduct in their service; and though the settlement of the public, as well as of my private accompts, pressed me to return as early as early as possible to France, yet I could not obtain any resolution of Congress, either to approve, or to disapprove, of any part of my conduct; and though I almost daily solicited for a second audience, I did not obtain one, until late in December following; I then gave them a written narrative of my transactions, from my leaving America, in their service, until my recall and return.

Congress then appeared disposed, to take the matter up, and to examine it, and to come to some determination on the subject; a committee was appointed to examine the state of their foreign affairs, and into the conduct of their commissioners and agents, and for greater dispatch, the committee

mittee were ordered to meet every evening, Saturday and Sunday evenings excepted; yet that committee never condescended, to admit me to an audience, or to ask me a single question on the subject of their enquiry; and though I had been sent for expressly to inform the Congress of the state of their affairs in Europe, yet their committee studiously evaded, the giving me an opportunity of laying before them, any information on the subject, or of explaining any part of my own conduct whilst in their service. During more than fourteen months attendance in Philadelphia, I obtained but two audiences from Congress, and none from their committee, whose proceedings and report (if indeed they made any) were kept secret from me.—In December, 1778, having waited five months in Philadelphia, almost daily soliciting Congress to examine my transactions whilst in their service, I found that a party, determined on my ruin, had sufficient interest to prevent all examination, and to bear me down, by the most mortifying delay, and neglect; I therefore resolved to lay my case before my countrymen, and fellow-citizens, but on my first address, Congress resolved to give me an audience, and afterwards appointed a committee, as I have before mentioned.—As I then flattered myself, that Congress had resolved to examine into the state of their foreign affairs,

and of those transactions in which I had been a principal actor, and to come to some determination on the subject, I could not consider myself at liberty to proceed, in publishing the state of my case; in the mean time I was attacked, and abused, in the most base and outrageous manner, in the public papers. I made no reply to the many calumnies, and falsehoods published by a noted scribbler, and by his associates, and patrons, but earnestly requested of Congress, and their committee, to grant me a hearing, and to do me justice; but my solicitations were ineffectual; though from December 1778, to August 1779, I wrote more than thirty letters to Congress, humbly petitioning for a public examination, and trial, yet they never condescended to take the least notice, of my requests. In private conversation with the members, I was told, that the only difficulty lay in my accounts not being settled. To obviate this, I returned to France, on assurances from Congress, that they had appointed, and empowered a gentleman in France, to audit, and settle all their public accounts; but on my arrival in France, in July, 1780, and application to him, I found that his power was so limited, that he declined acting under it. I wrote immediately to Congress, soliciting for more ample powers to him, or to some other person, and set myself to put not only my accounts, but those of my colleagues, and

and of every one, with whom I had transacted any business on account of the public, in a state for being audited, and settled; and I passed more than twelve months at Paris, at a heavy expence, flattering myself, that as Congress had made no objection whatever, to any part of my conduct in their service, except my not having settled my accounts, and as my enemies, both in Congress and out of it, professed to believe that I was a defaulter, they would not, after the prodigious expence of time, and money, which I had been put to, delay the appointment of an auditor to examine my accounts, and to ascertain the only point in question with regard to me; but I heard nothing on the subject, until November, 1781, when I received a resolve of Congress, informing me, that by the appointment of a consul, provision was made for the settlement of my accounts; but in a few days after, I met with Mr. Barclay, the consul, who, to my extreme surprize, and disappointment, assured me, that he had no instructions on the subject; and a few days after, this I had the mortification of learning, that my letters of May, and June preceding, had been intercepted, and published at New-York, and that the most unfavourable construction had been put upon them, both in America and in France. This placed me in such a situation, as I believe, but few men have ever been so unfortunate as to experience.

ence. Proscribed in my own country and in France, and obnoxious to this government, I submitted to a tedious exile in Flanders, where I remained, until the treaty of peace was concluded; but, in the mean time, I transmitted my accounts to Congress, and solicited a settlement and the payment of the balance due to me: I also sent duplicates of them to Dr. Franklin. It is now more than eighteen months, since Congress have been in possession of my accounts; it is more than five years, since I had either the money, or any employment for the public, entrusted to my management.

Is it possible, that any fraud or embezzlement committed by me should remain undetected? had I been guilty of any, would not my enemies, with all the particulars of my accounts in their power, have pointed them out and published them, instead of charging me generally with being a defaulter for unaccounted millions?

In March, 1778, Doctor Franklin assured Congress, that he had been an eye witness of my conduct in France, whilst his colleague, and that I had acted the part, of *an able, active, and faithful minister, and to his knowledge had, in various ways, rendered great and important service to my country.*

* In December, 1782, almost five years after, when,

when, from our difference in political principles, he was no way prejudiced in my favour, and when, had I been guilty of fraud, or embezzlement, it was impossible but that it must have come to his knowledge, he certified, that he had never known, or suspected any cause to charge me with any want of probity, in any purchase, or bargain whatever, made by me, for the use or account of the United States. To charge me with being a defaulter, and with having defrauded my country of large sums of money, and at the same time to evade an examination and settlement of my accounts, by which only the justice or injustice of the charge could be ascertained, is a conduct which needs no comment, nor do I fear to rest my cause on it, and on the testimony, and certificate of Doctor Franklin; but clear and convincing as these proofs are of my innocence, I have a sufficiency of others, independent of the testimonies, or certificates of any man, or of the conduct of any set of men, whether friendly, or inimical to me.

In January, 1776, I contracted with the commercial committee of Congress to make a voyage to France, and to purchase for the public, goods to the amount of forty thousand pounds sterling. They engaged to furnish me with that sum in cash or good bills, and to allow me a five *per cent.* commission on the purchase. At the same time, the secret committee appointed me the commercial

cial and political agent for the United States in Europe*, and directed me to purchase for them one hundred pieces of brass cannon, and arms, and cloathing for twenty-five thousand men, and ammunition in proportion; and to procure ships, in Europe, to transport the whole to America; on these purchases, they also stipulated to give me five *per cent.* commission, and to make me a reasonable and adequate allowance for any political services I might render my country in France. When we reflect on the situation of our affairs at that period, it must be acknowledged that no man was ever charged with a more important commission, and when the circumstance of my being ignorant of the language, as well as of the manners and politics of the country, in which I was to execute it; without friend or patron to advise, to countenance, or to introduce me, and without that best of all patrons, and supporters, a fund adequate to the purpose; when these are taken into consideration, it must also be allowed, that no commission of this nature was ever attended with more difficulties, and embarrassments. I left Philadelphia in the month of March, 1776, in a brig bound to Bourdeaux; and such was the situation of our affairs at that time, that she sailed with ballast only, on account of the want of

* Appendix, No. 5.

of any thing to make remittances with in a cargo. An accident at sea obliged her to return, and I reimarked in a sloop bound to Bermuda. The funds put into my hands, to enable me to execute my commission, and to make the above-mentioned purchases, to the value of nearly 300,000*l.* sterling, amounted to little more, than three thousand, in bills of exchange, about one third of which were protested, and returned; and of near five thousand pounds afterwards remitted to me in bills, one small bill, of two hundred and thirty pounds only, was accepted, and paid; and from my leaving Philadelphia, in 1776, until my return in 1778, no remittances were made of any importance to enable me to execute this important commission, which I undertook to execute, more from a certainty, that foreign aid was become absolutely necessary, and that it must be obtained, or our country must soon be obliged to give over the contest, and to submit unconditionally to the British Parliament, than from any pecuniary or personal motives. On my arrival in France in June, 1776, I applied (agreeable to my instructions from the secret committee) to the Minister, to obtain those supplies, on which the fate of the next year's campaign, and the issue of the war depended, but received neither countenance, or encouragement from him, any farther than a general promise of personal protection, and
that,

that, provided my operations, in procuring the cannon, military stores, &c. from individuals, and shipping them to America, should be carried on with so much caution, and secrecy, as to give no alarm to the British Ministers, the court of France would wink at the proceeding, but otherways they could not, as the treaties with Great Britain, and the King's ordinances, would not permit us to purchase and import military stores from France. My situation was extremely critical and arduous; I had in the first place to solicit a credit, from individuals, and to induce them to give it, I could not advance any part of the large capital wanted. I had not money even to defray the contingent expences, of the transportation of the stores, to the ports, at which they must be embarked, and I could give no other security for the articles wanted, than my letter of instructions from the secret committee, authorising me to make those purchases, and their general promise, in behalf of Congress, that the same should be paid for; but after I had obtained a credit, a still greater obstacle presented itself, for it was impossible to purchase a large train of artillery, and arms, cloathing, tents, and military stores for an army of twenty-five thousand men, and to transport the whole to the sea-ports, and embark them for America in such a secret, and private manner, as to elude the vigilance of the British Minister at the

Court

Court of Versailles, who, from my first arrival in Paris, could have been at no loss to conclude what the main object of my errand was.—In the month of July I obtained a credit for the whole of the stores wanted, and for the charter of ships to transport them to America; and apprehensive that some part of them might be intercepted on their passage, I ventured to exceed the orders given me, and instead of one hundred, I purchased upwards of two hundred pieces of brass cannon, and mortars, and arms, cloathing, and stores, for thirty thousand men, though my instructions were but for twenty-five thousand.—Besides these purchases, for which I obtained a credit for twelve months, and a promise of a longer term on interest, I purchased other stores, such as powder, saltpetre, &c. to the amount of about fifteen thousand pounds, on three months credit: and relying on remittances, being on the way to me, I gave my notes, and bills for the money.—The cannon, arms, &c. were purchased in different parts of France, a great part of the cannon were to be transported upwards of two hundred miles, part of the way by land, to the sea ports; this could not be done secretly, and the transportation of such a quantity of cannon, and military stores, at a time when France was in profound peace, necessarily excited inquiries, and no one could remain at a loss, as to their destination;—the consequence was, that

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the British minister remonstrated, and orders were issued to suspend our operations; in a few days, permission was privately obtained to proceed; fresh alarms were given, and repeated counter orders issued; whenever news unfavourable to us arrived from America, or the British Minister remonstrated in a high tone, all my operations were instantly suspended; a few anecdotes, and extracts of letters favourable to us, (whether authentic or not) with proper management, and a judicious application of *douceurs*, set the affair again in motion; and these permissions, and counter orders, succeeded each other every few weeks, and frequently oftener, until the stores were embarked; nor did the court quit this fluctuating mode of conduct, or give the least encouragement, of finally acting decisively in our favour, until the news of the surrender of General Burgoyne's army, arrived in France;—in a word, our success or misfortunes, and the remonstrances of the British Minister, gave the tone, and stile of the French Ministers, from my arrival in France, to the receipt of the above-mentioned intelligence, and even until the signing of the treaties of the 6th of February, 1778.—It would require a volume, to give but a general history of these manœuvres, and of the embarrassments, and expences which attended them; unfortunately for me, as well as for the creditor of those supplies, a great part of the expences

pences were of such a nature, that no vouchers can ever be produced for them.—When it was known, that orders were going to be issued, to suspend the transportation, or the embarkation of the cannon and stores, or to forbid the ships loaded, or loading with them, from sailing the doctours given to delay such orders, or the execution of them, for a few days, or for a few hours only, as was sometimes the case;—the extra sums given to waggoners, to boatmen and others to exert themselves on such occasions, can never be supported by vouchers. What I have already said, is sufficient to give a general idea of my situation at that time, and of the obstacles and embarrassments which I had to encounter with;—and it is well known, that I so far surmounted them, as to have upwards of two hundred pieces of brass cannon, and mortars, with thirty thousand fusils, with ammunition, cloathing and tents for an army of thirty thousand men at the ports, and ready to be embarked, and ships to receive them, in the month of November, within the short space of six months after my arrival in France.—It ought to be equally well known, that after the most positive orders were given by the Court, forbidding the embarkation of them, and the sailing of the ships, means were devised, and practised, so far to elude them, that two ships, the *Amphitrite* and *Mercure*, with near one hundred of the cannon,

twenty thousand fusils, and other stores, under pretence of sailing for St. Domingo, were got to sea, and fortunately arrived at Portsmouth, in New-Hampshire, in April, 1777; and that when General Burgoyne capitulated at Saratoga, his army was surrounded by men, armed with those fusils, and supported by that train of artillery, purchased and sent out, as I have already mentioned; and as that event alone, brought France to conclude a treaty with us, and enter into a war with England, the purchase, and sending out those cannon, arms, and stores, in a great degree decided the fate, or the independance of the United States.—To shew that I do not over-rate the importance of these supplies, or my service in procuring of them, I must refer to Monsi. Beaumarchais' letter of the 23d of March, 1778, to Congress, and to the letter from the President of Congress to him, of the 15th of January, 1779. Monsi. Beaumarchais says, "*I assure you, that if my zeal, my advances of money, my cargoes of stores and merchandize have been of service to the Honourable Congress, their gratitude on this occasion, is due to the indefatigable pains which Mr. Deane has taken through the whole of this transaction.*"

Congress, on the 15th of January, 1779, say, "*The Congress of the United States of America, sensible of your exertion in their favour, present you with their thanks, and assure you of their regard;—they*
lament

“lament the inconveniences you have suffered, by the great
 “advances made in support of these States; circum-
 “stances have prevented a compliance with their wishes,
 “but they will take the most effectual measures, in their
 “power to discharge the debt due to you;—the liberal
 “sentiments, and extensive views which alone could dic-
 “tate a conduct like yours, are conspicuous in your ac-
 “tions, and adorn your character; while with great
 “talents you served your Prince, you have gained the
 “esteem of this infant republic, and will receive the
 “merited applause of a new world.” I need not re-
 mind you of the treatment, which I met with, and
 that Congress, whilst they voted the thanks of the
 United States to Mons. Beaumarchais, and de-
 clared that his services, *merited the applause of a new
 world*, refused me an audience, or to take any
 notice of my petitions to them, for an examination
 of my conduct, whilst in the service of my country;
 although they at the same time knew, that but for
 me, the meritorious services, of that gentleman,
 would never have been performed.—Dr. Franklin
 arrived at Paris in December, 1776, but he
 brought no funds of any importance with him,
 from the Congress, and I found by his account
 of the state of affairs in America, that I could
 not depend on any remittances from thence. My
 situation was extremely distressing, the small sum
 which I brought out with me was expended, and
 my notes and bills above-mentioned were within
 a few

a few weeks of becoming due ; in this crisis the Court of France secretly interposed, and ordered Mr. Grand to pay us 500,000 livres quarterly, during the year ensuing ; and the Farmers General advanced one million of livres on a contract for tobacco. (The two millions from the Court was then said to be a free gift, and I know not, but have heard, that it has lately been charged in the accompt of France, against the United States,) By these sums I was enabled, to make good my personal engagements, and the commissioners put in a state to make further purchases of stores for our army, by advancing part of the purchase money. In the mean time, Congress, instead of making remittances, began to draw on their Commissioners for large sums, and in October, we found our funds so far exhausted, that our engagements exceeded what we could command, or depend on, by near two millions of livres. The Court was then at Fountainbleau, and, from the unfavourable accounts from America, appeared less disposed to assist us, than at any preceding period ; but on my going to Fountainbleau, and informing the Minister of our situation, and that without an immediate advance of money, we could not execute the contracts we had entered into, for cloathing. &c. and must give over any further attempts to furnish our countrymen, with stores for prosecuting the war, I obtained a promise from him, that

that Mr. Grand should pay us, three million of livres in the course of the year then ensuing, in quarterly payments; this enabled us to make good our engagements. At the time of my leaving France to return to America, the first quarter, or 750,000 livres had become due, and Mr. Grand had given the United States credit for that sum, which with the sums before-mentioned, amounted to 3,750,000 livres, which was the total of the monies, received by Mr. Grand on our account to that time, and his accounts which I gave to Congress in August, 1778, shew to whom, and on what account he paid it out; and that he paid me 69,225 livres 7s. 6d. for my private expences; I have charged Congress with the sum of 100,947 livres $\frac{1}{4}$ for the whole amount of them, from my engaging in the public service in January, 1776, to my return to France, in July, 1780, to settle the public accounts.—Mr. Arthur Lee, in his letter to Congress, dated June 1, 1778, says, “*I find that the expence of living in character, cannot be less than three thousand pounds sterling per annum, and adds, if left to themselves, I conceive that most persons will exceed that sum;*” that is 68571 livres. I was (as Mr. Lee expresses it) left to myself, but I did not exceed that sum. From June, 1776, to April, 1778, almost two years, I advanced nearly the whole of the monies paid out for the relief of prisoners; the sum of 6406 livres 5s. 9d. only was

was paid by the banker; my charges for this department amount to 19,225 livres 7s. 10d. but in eleven months from my recal, Congress are charged by the Commissioners, with the sum of 33,782 livres 19s. advanced to prisoners; from such facts, a judgment may be formed of my œconomy, or dissipation whilst in the service of my country.—The amount of my charges to Congress, exclusive of my commission account, is 258,194 livres 9s. 2d. of which my expences already mentioned, amount to 100,947 livres $\frac{1}{2}$, the remainder was for my time, and disbursements of various kinds, specified in my account, long since before Congress; on this account the ballance is 175,107 livres $\frac{7}{8}$ in my favour.—Mr. William Lee made one journey to Vienna, on account of the public, and Mr. Izard who was at Paris for the education of his children, received whilst there a commission from Congress to the Court of Tuscany, but never went out of Paris or quitted his family on the business of the public; the former of these gentlemen received 72,000 livres, and the latter 60,000 for their private expences; yet these men are among the loudest against me for an extravagant waste of public money.—And permit me here, my countrymen and fellow-citizens, to request, that you will examine for yourselves, or that if your distance from Congress, will not permit you to do it, that you will demand of your delegates an account of all the monies

monies ever remitted to me by Congress, or that I ever received on their account; by this you will be able to form a judgment, with sufficient precision, if I am a defaulter for millions, as has been asserted by my enemies, or one of the public creditors.

But exclusive of the above ballance due to me, after accounting for all the monies, received by me, I am entitled to a commission of five per cent. on goods and military stores purchased by me, to the amount of 4,756,393 livres, 17 sols, which makes the sum of 238,445 livres, expences of postage, &c. included. These goods and military stores I purchased, previous to the arrival of my colleagues, in consequence of the order given me by the secret committee of Congress, and on which I was promised the same commission, as was then given to other agents and purchasers, which was uniformly five per cent. — For the purchases made jointly with my colleagues, I have not charged any thing, being then in a different capacity, as joint commissioner plenipotentiary, with them. Thus it appears, that instead of being a defaulter, I am one of the public creditors, and to a large amount; and of all the public creditors, perhaps no one has suffered so much in point of interest, certainly no one so much in point of character; but of this I may take notice, on some future occasion. I need not take up any more of your time at present on the subject of

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my accounts, they have long since been before Congress, and to them I appeal, to justify the general state, which I have given of my money transactions for the public. I have shewn, and it will appear from them, that from my arrival in France in June, 1776, to the December following, when joined by Doctor Franklin and Mr. Lee, I had had no money, or next to none of the public's, at any time in my hands; but, on the contrary, was at that time, in advance for my employers; and that afterwards, until my return to America, I did not receive a sum, any way equal to my expences and disbursements; and from that period to the present, I have not had any public employment. The second charge against me is, on account of my having in May and June, 1781, wrote my opinion of our public affairs to my friends in America, and advised peace, and an accommodation with Great-Britain.

I confess that the letters published by Rivington in New-York, as mine, do not materially differ from those which I actually wrote at that time and which, unfortunately for me, were intercepted; and that they contain the undisguised sentiments of my heart, on the then apparent situation of our affair; but I never yet heard of its being, a crime in any free state, for the citizens of it to give their opinion, and advice on public affairs, and measures. To suppose me to have been in the interest of the
 ministers

ministers of this country, and to have wrote those letters to promote their views, is as absurd as to suppose, that I amassed an immense fortune in the service of my country; yet, although my well known circumstances, and connections, at that period, and previous to it, as well as since, demonstrate the absurdity, and falsehood of such suppositions, yet both the one, and the other have been not only *suggested*, but positively asserted, by certain writers in America, who stick at nothing, however extravagant.

I can hardly imagine, notwithstanding the late, and present prosperous state of our affairs, that any one can have forgot the situation, in which they were in 1781, when I wrote those letters, and previous to the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, and of his army at York. In May, and in June, 1781, the British forces were in possession, of the whole of our sea coast, from the Chesapeak southward; and whilst they ravaged, and distressed the interior country, their ships of war and cruizers intercepted almost the whole of our trade, and of our supplies. We had no naval force, to oppose to theirs, nor any probability at that time, that our ally would send to our assistance, a naval force superior to that of the enemy. The army under General Washington, was too weak of itself, for any offensive operations; and Congress had neither money or credit, to put it on a more respectable footing.

General Washington did not scruple at that period to declare, " that without a decidedly superior " fleet to that of Great-Britain in America, all opposition to the British forces in America, would " soon be at an end." All the letters from America were in the same stile ; many circumstances at that time, my own observations, and the information I was then in the way of, led me to conclude, that there was not the least probability, of there being a French fleet on our coast that campaign, superior to the British. Accidents, and circumstances, unforeseen at that time, and those extremely improbable ones, gave the French fleet that superiority, which alone decided the fate of Lord Cornwallis, and of his army at York. Had not this event happened, of which when I wrote there was not the most distant probability, the war must have terminated against us in that campaign ;—In this I was supported by the unanimous opinion, of the best judges on the subject, then in America : was it a crime in me, to write to America in the same stile, in which our Generals, and leading men, wrote to their friends in Europe ? My letters have been published, theirs have not ; this is the sole difference, except the cruel circumstance of mine having been published by the enemy, at a time when our danger was over, and when the publication could serve no other purpose, but to ruin me in the opinion of my countrymen.

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At the time of my writing, every thing conspired to convince me, that France had only her own interest, and that of Spain in view, in the war; and that however it might terminate, she would be very far from consulting our interest in the peace; persuaded of this, I wrote it to be my opinion, and for this I have been deemed an enemy and traitor to France, as well as to the United States.

But have not events, in part already justified this opinion of mine? You best know by what intrigues the French Court prevailed with Congress, to order our commissioners, not to sign any treaty with Great-Britain, without the knowledge and consent of the Court of Versailles; and thus to put our future *peace, liberty, and safety*, absolutely into their power: nor can you, I presume, be ignorant, that the Court of France, having thus bound us, began to take off the mask, and to take measures with, and to propose terms to, the other powers for excluding us from the fisheries, and for supporting the extravagant claims of Spain to East Louisiana; and that our commissioners, alarmed at this, wisely ventured to sign the preliminary articles, without either the knowledge or consent of the ministers at Versailles. Are not these well known facts, abundantly sufficient to justify me, for having in 1781, entertained suspicions of France, in her professions of disinterested friendship to the United States? By our treaty with Great-Britain,

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we are entitled to a right in her share of the Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia fisheries ; but has not France wholly excluded us from any in hers ? Does not France at this time encourage and support Spain, in her claims to the richest and most extensive part of the territory allowed by Great-Britain, in the late treaty, to belong to us ? These attempts are not marks of friendship, but are the most unequivocal characteristics, of that insidious, interested policy, which I pointed out in my letters, and warned my friends to be on their guard against.

In my letter to Mr. Morris, I gave him my opinion, with respect to the future state of our commerce, under independent sovereignty, and the grounds on which I was led to form it ; and I shall be happy, if experience, (which alone can decide in such cases) proves that my opinion and reasoning on that subject, were erroneous and ill-founded. Apprehensive at the time, and distressed by the thought, that we must either fail in the contest, and in such case submit to the laws of our conquerors, rendered imperious, and severe, from their success ; Or, that if successful ourselves, that in the situation in which our country must be, on the peace ; burthened with heavy taxes on account of the public debts contracted by the war, and still heavier for the future support of independant sovereignty, and at the same time exposed to the evils arising from
internal

internal factions, and divisions, and from our jarring and incompatible interests; that our democratic governments, which we had established in Congress, and in our several States, would not be found to have sufficient energy, and coercion, to establish and maintain such a degree of order, and of due subordination, as must ever be indispensably necessary, in all governments, to prevent anarchy and confusion; And that in such a situation, independent sovereignty, instead of proving a blessing, must become the heaviest misfortune, which could befall us;—Strongly impressed by this opinion, I judged it to be my duty, to urge and press my countrymen, by every argument in my power, to improve that important crisis, and by an accommodation, and re-union with Great-Britain, on equal, safe, and honourable terms, to secure our future peace, safety and liberty, both internal, and external.

I then thought that a re-union, not simply on the condition of being replaced in the state, in which we were, previous to 1763; (for which alone, Congress in 1774, and afterwards in 1775, petitioned,) but on conditions, and terms, every way preferable; viz. Those of being governed, solely by laws of our own enacting, and of being taxed only by our assemblies, and of enjoying the same commercial privileges, and protections, as other subjects of the British Empire were, or might be entitled to; I say that it was then my opinion, that an accommodation and re-union

union on those terms, was to be preferred, to a continuation of the war, to running the risque of its uncertain issue, and to hazarding the dangerous experiment of Independant Sovereignty.—This opinion of mine, has been deemed a crime little short of that of high treason.—But it ought to be remembered, that this was simply my opinion, and that I communicated it to my friends, at a time, when our prospects were gloomy, and discouraging.

It is proper here, to review the sentiments of the first, and of the second Congress on this subject; the first in their resolutions, and in their petition to the King, complain of no grievances anterior to 1763: their words are, “ We present this petition, only to
 “ obtain redress of grievances, and relief from
 “ fears, and jealousies, occasioned by the system of
 “ statutes, and regulations, adopted since the close
 “ of the late war, for raising a revenue in
 “ America;—extending the powers of the Courts
 “ of Admiralty, and Vice Admiralty;—trying
 “ persons in Great-Britain, for offences alledged
 “ to be committed in America;—affecting the
 “ Province of the Massacusetts Bay;—and alter-
 “ ing the Government, and extending the limits
 “ of Quebec.” This is the list of grievancees, then
 enumerated, and they add, “ By the abolition of
 “ which system, the harmony between Great-
 “ Britain, and these Colonies, so necessary to the
 “ happiness of both, and so ardently desired by
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" the latter, and the usual intercourses will be im-
 " mediately restored ;—for, appealing to that Be-
 " ing who searches thoroughly the hearts of his
 " creatures, we solemnly profess, that our councils
 " have been influenced by no other motive, than
 " a dread of impending destruction." (That is
 from the above system). " Permit us then, most
 " gracious Sovereign, in the name of all your
 " faithful people in America, with the utmost
 " humility to implore you, for the honor of
 " Almighty God, *whose pure religion* *our enemies*
 " *are undermining*, for your glory, which can be
 " advanced only by rendering your subjects
 " happy, for the interest of your family ; depend-
 " ing on an adherence to the principles that en-
 " throned it ; for the safety and welfare of your
 " kingdoms, and dominions, threatened with
 " almost unavoidable dangers, and distresses, that
 " your Majesty, as the loving father of your whole
 " people, connected by the same bonds, *of law,*
 " *loyalty, faith, and blood*, though dwelling in
 " different countries, will not suffer the transcen-
 " dant relation formed by these ties to be farther
 " violated, in uncertain expectation of effects that,
 " if attained, never can compensate for the cala-
 " mities through which they must be gained, we
 " therefore, &c."—These were the sentiments of
 the first Congress ;—the second, though con-
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vened after hostilities had been commenced,
 and although their petition was agreed to, after
 they had made an arrangement of the army, had
 commissioned the generals, had issued money and
 become to all intents, *de facto*, Independent; yet
 they still persevered in the same sentiments, as to
 their grievances, and the terms on which a recon-
 ciliation was desired; they refer to the petition
 of the first Congress, and solemnly "declare, be-
 fore God and the world, that they had not
 raised armies with the ambitious designs, of se-
 parating from Great-Britain, and establishing
 Independent States," and that they fought,
 not for glory or conquest;" and add, "attached
 to your Majesty's Person, Family, and Govern-
 ment, with all that devotion which principle,
 or affection can inspire, connected with Great-
 Britain, by the strongest ties which can unite
 societies, our breasts retain too tender a regard
 for the kingdom from which we derive our
 origin, to request such a reconciliation as
 might in any manner be inconsistent, with her
 dignity and welfare; these, related as we are to
 her, honor and duty, as well as inclination,
 induce us to support and advance." Within a
 few days after signing of this petition, Doctor
 Franklin drew up several resolutions in form of
 proposals, to be made by Congress for a reconci-
 liation, which he introduced in the following
 words;

words; " Forasmuch as the enemies of America,
 " in the Parliament of Great Britain, to render
 " us odious to the nation, and give an ill im-
 " pression of us in the minds of other European
 " Powers, have represented us unjust and un-
 " grateful in the highest degree; asserting on every
 " occasion, that the Colonies were settled at the
 " expence of Britain, &c. *That they aim at inde-*
 " *pendency, that they intend an abolition of the Na-*
 " *avigation Acts, &c. and as by frequent repetition of*
 " *these groundless assertions, and malicious calumnies,*
 " *may, if not contradicted and refuted, obtain farther*
 " *credit, and be injurious throughout Europe to the*
 " *reputation, and interest of the confederated Colonies,*
 " it seems proper, and necessary to examine them
 " in our own just vindication." He then pro-
 ceeds to shew, that these charges were groundless,
 and then to make the following proposals: " That
 " on a reconciliation with Britain, we shall not
 " only continue to grant aid in time of war, but
 " whenever she shall think fit to abolish her mo-
 " nopoly, and give us the same privileges in trade,
 " as Scotland received at the Union, and allow
 " us a free commerce with all the rest of the
 " world, we shall willingly agree to give and pay
 " into the sinking fund, 100,000 l. sterling an-
 " nually, for the space of one hundred years to
 " come, which duty, faithfully and inviolably
 " applied to that purpose, is demonstrably
 " more than sufficient to extinguish all her present

“ national debt, &c. But if Britain does not
 “ think fit to accept this proposition, we, in
 “ order to remove her groundless jealousies,
 “ *that we aim at independence, and an abolition*
 “ *of the Navigation Act, which, in truth, has never*
 “ *been our intention,* and to avoid all future
 “ disputes about the right of making that, and
 “ other acts, for the regulating our commerce, do
 “ hereby declare ourselves ready, and willing to
 “ enter into a covenant with Great-Britain, that
 “ she shall fully possess, enjoy, and exercise that
 “ right for one hundred years to come.” (See
 “ the Doctor’s political, miscellaneous and philo-
 “ sophical pieces, fol. 357) His editor says,
 “ *This paper was drawn up in a committee of Con-*
 “ *gress, June 25, 1775, but does not appear on their*
 “ *minutes; a severe act of parliament which arrived*
 “ *about that time, having determined them not to give*
 “ *the sum proposed in it.*” But the editor was mis-
 informed; the paper here referred to, was not
 drawn up in a committee, nor by the direction of
 Congress, or by the advice of a committee.—
 Doctor Franklin first committed his thoughts, on
 the terms for a reconciliation, to writing, and
 afterwards, in a committee, which was appointed
 for a very different purpose, whilst their report
 was transcribing, he read the draught above-
 mentioned: Col. R. H. Lee, who was one of the
 committee, approved of it, and requested the
 Doctor

Doctor to lay it before Congress, or to permit him to do it, not as a report, for no committee had been appointed on the subject, but in the usual way of motion, by an individual member; Doctor Franklin declined the taking of this, on himself, and gave the paper to Col. Lee, who the next day introduced, and read it in Congress, and moved that the two proposals contained in it, should pass into resolutions of the house; the motion was seconded, and supported by a delegate from one of the New England states, since unjustly charged, with having aimed at independence from the first of the dispute: the proposals appeared no way disagreeable to the house, but it was observed, that having but a few days before, in a petition to his Majesty, requested him *to direct the mode and forms "for a happy, and permanent reconciliation,"* it was proper to wait the effects of that petition, and that, in the mean time, to make any specific proposals, would be premature, and to a certain degree inconsistent with our own requests; besides this objection, a great part of the members, especially of those from the Southern states, were still confident, that the prayer of our petition would be granted, and a reconciliation take place on the terms, of our being restored to the state in which we were, at and previous, to 1763. On these considerations the motion was withdrawn; and the reason why no entry was made

made of it, in the minutes or journals of Congress, was, least after being restored unconditionally to the state in which we were in 1763, future advantage might be taken of these offers. As I was one of the committee, to whom the contents of this paper was first communicated, and in Congress during the transaction, I cannot in justice to the wishes, and disposition of Congress, at that time for a reconciliation, omit giving this brief history of those proposals; and in justice to myself, I must observe, that the terms proposed by me in my letters, are infinitely preferable, to those offered, and prayed for by the first, and second Congress, as well as to those contained, in this paper drawn up by Doctor Franklin. After the declaration of independence, Doctor Franklin, with the knowledge and approbation of Congress, corresponded with Lord Howe; in his letter of the 30th of July, 1776, to his Lordship, he says, " Long did I endeavour with unfeigned and unwearied zeal, to preserve from breaking that fine, and noble china vase, the British empire; for I knew, that being once broken, the separate parts could not retain, even *their share* of the strength, and value, which existed in the whole, and that *a perfect re-union of those parts could scarce ever be hoped for.*" Was it a crime in me, in 1781, to wish for a perfect re-union, and in private letters, to urge my friends to do all in their

their power to promote, and bring about an *event* (which, by the Doctor's letter, appears to have been, even in 1776) *most devoutly to be wished for?*

But we now enjoy independent sovereignty and peace, on the most favourable and honourable terms, and have obtained every thing which we either hoped for, or demanded; and happy, indeed, should I be, were I certain, that none of the evils, which I apprehended in 1781, were either felt, or feared by my countrymen at this time; in such case I should be contented, to be ridiculed, or even pitied for my weak, and gloomy forebodings. But General Washington, in his circular letter, says, "That it is a question, yet to be
 "decided, whether the revolution must ultimately be considered as a blessing, or a curse.
 "A blessing, or a curse, not to the present age
 "alone, for with our fate will the destiny of
 "unborn millions be involved." I ask, that these expressions of the General, after the great object of our independent sovereignty, has been obtained, and ratified by treaties, may be compared with the expressions in my letters of 1781, on the same subject, and that my countrymen will then say, if it was a criminal desertion of the cause, of my country, or if it was an unpardonable weakness, and despondency of mind in me at that time, to make a question of that, which now, when success and peace, have secured our independent sovereignty,
 is

is by General Washington declared to be still a *question undecided* and doubtful, and that not only so as to the present day, but to future ages. If, indeed, the small degree of order, of restraint, and of subordination, which has for the last seven years prevailed in our country, be now thrown off, and the legislative and executive powers once more return, in effect, into the hands of committees, and conventions; if in place of that subordination to law and government, of those decent, frugal, and virtuous manners, and habits; of that ease, and even affluence, in which our fellow-citizens formerly lived in peace and safety; in a word, if instead of those manners, principles, and circumstances, which once marked our character, the reverse should in future take place, and prevail, under a government too weak, to prevent or remedy the evils, there cannot then remain a question on the subject, but such anarchy and confusion must ensue, as to render our independence a curse, and the present and future age in America, as unhappy as any ages to be met with, in the history of civilized nations have ever been.

The great end of civil society is, to secure to men united in it, the great blessings of peace, of liberty and safety, both in their persons and in their property, and in deciding what form of government most effectually answers this great and
beneficent

beneficent purpose, experience, not theory, must direct us.

This is not a subject for recluse philosophers, or subtle metaphysicians, to decide on in their closets;—and whenever they have been referred to, they have given the preference to Utopian, or ideal and imaginary systems of their own, before those plain and simple ones, which experience has shewn to be practicable and safe.—But without looking abroad, to profit by the experience of other nations, our own must now, with the utmost precision, and certainty, determine this great question, as *yet undecided*, and bring conviction, home to every one; either that our present system of government is preferable, to that under which we and our ancestors, for more than one century and a half, were free, safe, and happy, or that it is not. Our situation, previous to the late revolution, must be still fresh in our memories, and our present, cannot long be disguised or misunderstood by us, from our senses; from what we see and feel, we must judge with certainty of it; and by comparing the present with the past, this important question *must ultimately be decided*.

If happily for us, it be in favour of the present, no man will more sincerely rejoice than what I shall on the occasion; but if on a comparison of our present with our past situation, the revolution should, which General Washington, seems to ap-

apprehend, be found a *curse*, instead of a *blessing* then indeed, I shall be one of the most unhappy of men, and the sole consolation which will be left me, will be (the almost only one which I now enjoy) a consciousness of my integrity, in the service of my country, and of the purity and rectitude of my intentions, in the opinion and advice, which, in 1781, I gave in my letters to my friends in America.—Having shewn, that instead of being a defaulter, I am a creditor of the public's to a considerable amount, and impartially stated the contents, and object of my letters of 1781, I shall take my leave for the present, and submit the whole, to your candid consideration, and whatever my fate may be, if to be restored to your good opinion and confidence, and to the bosom of my friends, and country, or to remain far exiled from them, the first and most ardent wish of my soul, will ever be, that my country's happiness may be perpetual, in the full enjoyment of peace, liberty and safety.

I am with great sincerity and respect,

Your friend and fellow citizen,

S. D E A N E.

London, August 10, 1783.

P. S. I have avoided entering on the subject of the numerous calumnies, which have been propagated

pagated against me, by anonymous writers, it would have been endless, and quite unnecessary, since every thing which has either been said, or suggested against me, may be reduced to two questions only. First, if I acted faithfully, and was an honest steward of the public money, whilst in the service of my country; and secondly, if the contents of my letters of May, and June, 1781, were of such a nature as to merit the harsh censures, passed on me in America on their account; In France, I can expect no other, than to be condemned, it is what every one must expect, who calls in question, the disinterestedness of the motives of France in the late war, or who attempts to prevent our country, from becoming virtually dependant on that power. As to the reports circulated here, and which may probably reach America, of my being at the levees of the Ministers, and in frequent conference with them, and that I have acted an unfriendly part respecting our commerce, and the like, I can with the greatest truth and sincerity declare, that there is not the least foundation for them, I have not so much as seen any of the Ministers, since my arrival in this country.—And as to our commerce, I gave my opinion in 1781, in my letter to Mr. Morris, as to the restrictions, which I thought it would fall under on a peace; if any part of what I then apprehended has been realised, I am not to blame;

I most heartily wish that no part of it may ever be so, but that experience may shew me, to have been in an error in what I wrote on that subject.

A P P E N D I X.

No. 1.

COPY OF A LETTER FROM THE COUNT DE
VERGENNES TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
CONGRESS.MONSIEUR, *A Versailles, le 25 Mars, 1778.*

M. DEANE se disposans à retourner en Amérique, je faisé avec plaisir, cette, occasion pour rendre témoignage au zélé, à l'activité & à l'intelligence avec les quels il s'est occupé des intérêts des Etats unies ; c'est à ces differens titres qu'il à mérité, l'estime du Roi mon Maître, & que Sa Majesté à bien voulu lui donner de marques de sa satisfaction. Au reste M. Deane pourra rendre compte au Congrès, des dispositions ou est le Roi à l'égard des Etats unies. Les liens qu'ils ont formés, avec Sa Majesté, doivent remplir leurs vœux, le Roi, de son côté est non seulement convaincu qu'ils sont fondés sur des principes inaltérables, mais aussi qu'ils contribueront au bonheur des deux peuples.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec une très sincere attachment,

Monfieur,

Votre très, humble & très obeissans serviteur,
DE VERGENNES.

TRAN-

No. 1.

TRANSLATION OF A LETTER FROM THE
COUNT DE VERGENNES TO THE PRE-
SIDENT OF THE CONGRESS.

SIR,

At Versailles, 25th March, 1778.

Mr. DEANE being about to return to America, I embrace the occasion with pleasure, to give my testimony to the zeal, activity, and intelligence with which he has conducted the interests of the United States, by which he has merited the esteem of the King, my Master, and for which his Majesty has been pleased to give him marks of his satisfaction. Mr. Deane will be able to inform Congress, of the disposition of the King toward the United States; the engagements formed with his Majesty, will doubtless satisfy their wishes. The King on his part, is not only convinced that they are founded on principles unalterable, but also that they will contribute to the happiness of both nations.

I have the honor to be with the most sincere attachment,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

(Copy.)

(Signed.) DE VERGENENS.

No. 2.

No. 2.

LETTER *from his* EXCELLENCY THE COUNT
DE VERGENNES, MINISTER, *and* SECRETARY
of STATE, *March* 26, 1778.

A Versailles, le 26 Mars, 1778.

COMME je ne dois plus, Monsieur, avoir l'honneur de vous voir avant votre départ, je vous prie de recevoir ici mes souhaits pour que votre voyage, soit prompt et heureux, et que vous trouviez dans votre patrie les memes sentimens que vous avez inspirés en France. Vous n'aviés rein a desirer Monsieur, de ceux que je vous ai voüés et que je vous conserverai autant que je vivrai; ils vous sont garans du veritable interest que je ne cesserai dans aucun tems de prendre a votre bonheur comme a la prosperité de votre patrie.

Le Roi desirant vous donner un temoignage personnel de la satisfaction qu'il a de votre conduite, m'a chargé d'en informer M. Le President du Congrès unis; cest l'objet de la lettre que M. Gerard vous remettra pour M. Hancock; il vous remettra encore une boete avec le portrait du Roi; vous ne refuserés par sans doute d'emporter dans votre patrie l'image de son ami le plus zélé.—La preuve en est dans faits.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec une tres sincere consideration, MONSIEUR, Votre tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur,

DE VERGENNES.

M. DEANE.

At Versailles, the 26th March, 1778.

AS I am not, Sir, to have the honour of seeing you again before your departure, I pray you to receive here my wishes; that your voyage may be speedy, short, and happy, and that you may find in your own country the same sentiments which you have inspired in France. You need not, Sir, desire any addition to those which I have devoted to you, and which I shall preserve for you to the end of my life; they will be sureties to you of the true interest which I shall for ever take in your happiness, as well as in the prosperity of your country.

The King, desirous of giving you a personal testimony of the satisfaction which he has in your conduct, has charged me to communicate it to the President of the Congress of the United States; this is the object of the letter which Mr. Gerard will deliver you for Mr. Hancock; he will also deliver you a box with the King's portrait. You will not, I presume, Sir, refuse to carry to your country the image of its most zealous friend.—The proof of this is in facts.

I have the honour to be, with the most sincere consideration, S I R, Your most humble, and most obedient servant,

DE VERGENNES.

H

Passy,

No. 3.

Passy, near Paris, March 31, 1778.

S I R,

MY colleague, Mr. Deane, being recalled by Congress, and no reasons given that have yet appeared here, it is apprehended to be the effect of some misrepresentations from an enemy or two at Paris, and at Nantes. I have no doubt that he will be able, clearly to justify himself, but having lived intimately with him now fifteen months, the greatest part of the time in the same house, and been a constant witness of his public conduct, I cannot omit giving this testimony, though unasked, in his behalf, that I esteem him a faithful, active, and able minister, who, to my knowledge, has done, in various ways, great and important services to his country, whose interests I wish may always be, by every one in her employ, as much, and as effectually promoted.

With my dutiful respects to the Congress,

I have the honour to be,

S I R,

your most obedient,

and most humble servant,

BEN. FRANKLIN.

*Hon. HENRY LAURENS,
President of Congress.*

No. 4.

CERTAIN paragraphs having lately appeared in the English news-papers, importing, that Silas Deane, Esq. formerly Agent, and Commissioner Plenipotentiary, of the United States of America, had some time after his first "arrival in France, " purchased in that kingdom, for the use of his " countrymen, 30,000 muskets, &c. that he gave " three livres for each of them, being old condemned arms; that he had them cleaned and " vamped up, which cost near three livres more, " and that for each of these, he charged and received a louis d'or."—And that he also committed similar frauds, in the purchase of other articles, for the use of his country; and Mr. Deane having represented, that the said paragraphs, are likely to injure him in the opinions of many persons, unacquainted with his conduct, whilst in public service; I think it my duty, in compliance with his request, to certify, and declare, that the paragraphs in question, according to my best knowledge and belief, are entirely false, and that I have never known, or suspected any cause to charge the said Silas Deane, with any want of probity, in any purchase, or bargain whatever made by him for the use or account of the United States.

Given at Passy, the 18th December, 1782.

(Signed.)

B. FRANKLIN,

Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States
of America, at the Court of France.

No. 5.

EXTRACT OF INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY
THE SECRET COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS,
MARCH 2d, 1776, "TO THE HON. SILAS
" DEANE, ESQ. AGENT FOR THE THIRTEEN
" UNITED COLONIES.

" The supply we at present want is cloathing,
" and arms, for 25,000 men, with a suitable
" quantity of ammunition, and 100 field pieces.
" If France should grant these supplies, the whole
" will make a cargo which it might be well to
" secure, by a convoy of two or three ships of war.
" But if these supplies on the credit of Congress
" should be refused, (that is by the Court of
" France) you are then to endeavor the obtaining
" permission, of purchasing those articles, or so
" much of them as you can find credit for."

(Signed)

B. FRANKLIN,

BENJ. HARRISON,

JOHN DICKINSON,

ROBT. MORRIS,

JOHN JAY.

} Secret

} Committee.

THE

THE following letter, contains the substance of what in 1781, I wrote to my friends, and correspondents in America, in those letters, which were intercepted, and published in New York; where the publication by Rivington, differs from the original, I have noted, and corrected it, in this, and therefore the present may be relied on, to be authentic.—The variations in this, or in any of those letters, as published, from the originals are not so material, as to acquit me, of the censures, already passed on me, by my countrymen on account of their contents, if on an impartial examination of the sentiments, expressed in them, and on a review of the state of public affairs, at the time, when I wrote, it shall be judged, that I merited those censures.—I have selected this letter, because that it contains, more fully, than any one of the others, my sentiments, at the time, of the past, and of the then probable future situation, of the commerce, of the United States, under independant sovereignty.—The very unfavourable appearance of the war, on the part of my country, at the time, when I wrote, added to the treatment, which I had met with, by the prevalence of a faction in America, and to a series of private misfortunes, may be supposed,

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to have cast a gloom, over a mind, by nature, and habit, not either volatile, or sanguine, and to have turned my view, to the unfavourable side of the objects before me;—with the candid, and generous, these circumstances, will apologize for me, if indeed any apology can be thought necessary, for a free citizen's having communicated his sentiments, on subjects of infinite importance to his country, in confidential letters to his fellow-citizens, and intimate friends. If this be a crime, if by this I have merited the obloquy, and censure, with which I have been loaded in America. I can only say, that it is a newly discovered crime, and that a correspondence, similar to that of mine, was never before deemed criminal, or reprehensible, in any free state, from the earliest ages of the world, to the present.

From various circumstances, and accidents, unforeseen, and improbable at the time, the issue of the war, with some other, less important events, have been very different, from what I feared, and thought to be inevitable, when I wrote;—this has afforded a subject for triumph over me, to those, who judge of men, and of measures, only by events; I do not repine at their triumph, on the contrary, I most ardently pray, that it may be compleat, and that not one of the evils, which my gloomy imagination foreboded, in 1781, may ever be realized.—The substance of all my letters,

ters, which were intercepted, and published, tended in the first place, to shew the extreme improbability, of the final establishment, of the independant sovereignty, of the United States; and secondly, that if established, it would prove rather a curse, than a blessing to us; the first point is already determined, and contrary to the appearance of the war, in 1781, our independance, and sovereignty, are acknowledged, and confirmed to us, by the treaty of peace;—but the second, and infinitely the most important, is a question, which General Washington, in his circular letter, says, *is still to be decided.* At the date of my letters, in May, and June, 1781, the issue of the war, was at best doubtful; but he wrote, after the war had been concluded, and the independant sovereignty of the United States, was confirmed, in the most explicit, and favourable terms, yet he says, “*It is a question which remains still to be decided, whether the revolution must ultimately be considered, as a blessing, or a curse;—a blessing, or a curse, not to the present age alone, for with our fate, will the destiny of unborn millions, be involved.*” In my letter of the 20th of May, 1781, to Mr. Root, after a brief review, of the progress of the war, and of the state of our affairs, at that time, I said; “*From these reflections, combined with all the facts, and informations, that I have been able to obtain, I have deduced two propositions, of the truth of which*
I am

*" I am fully convinced, however extraordinary they may
 " appear in America:—The first of these is, that there
 " is no probability of our being able, finally to establish
 " our independancy; and the second, that if it were
 " established, it would prove rather a curse, than a
 " blessing to us."* My views in publishing this letter, with a few observations on it, are, in the first place, to obtain, a calm, and impartial rehearing, in which I flatter myself, that I shall not be condemned for having, in 1781, given it as my opinion, that independance, if obtained, would *" prove rather a curse, than a blessing, to us, since after its being established, General Washington in his letter referred to above, declares it to be a question, still undecided:—Secondly, to shew my countrymen, (who have been told that I am inimical to their commercial interests) what my sentiments were in 1781, as to the embarrassments, and restrictions, which our commerce must necessarily meet with, under independant sovereignty, and that if events, have hitherto tended, to justify those sentiments, I cannot thence be culpable, for having foreseen, what from the first, to the present moment, I have done every thing in my power to prevent. And in the last place, by again laying before my countrymen, or reminding them, of the principles, and grounds, on which I formed my opinion, that our political, and commercial situation, would be every way less favourable, under independency,*

independency, than what it had been, previous to our separation from Great-Britain, or that independency would prove *rather a curse, than a blessing*, I may excite them, to take proper, and reasonable measures, to avoid those evils, which I apprehended, when I wrote those letters. If I succeed in these points, I shall be perfectly satisfied, and if in the last only, by much the most important object, in my view, will be obtained.

Paris, 10th June, 1781.

Dear Sir,

THE dangerous crisis* to which our affairs are rapidly advancing affects me greatly—I can speak of nothing else with attention when in company,

* At the date of this letter, the British forces were in possession of New-York, of Long Island, and Staten Island, of all the sea coast, from the Capes of Virginia Southward, they had penetrated far, into the country, without meeting, with any material resistance, and had such a decided superiority, in the American seas, that full three-fourths, of all the vessels that put to sea, from the United States, were captured;—The paper of Congress could not be passed at any rate, and General Washington, with other general officers, in their letters, to their friends in Europe, did not scruple to say, that, without aid from France, in money to pay the troops, and a fleet decidedly superior to the British, all opposition, would end with that campaign.—The whole of the naval force, ordered by France to America, that season, (that is, to the Continent, and to the West-Indies) was not equal, to that of the British, then on those seas;—the Count de Grasse, who commanded, was ordered first to the West-Indies, and thence to the Continent, but as upwards of four hundred sail of French merchant ships, would in the course of that Summer, be in want of a convoy from the West-Indies, to Europe, and it was given out, and expected, that the Count, previous to his sailing, to the Northward, would send off that rich fleet of merchantmen, under a strong convoy, which would have rendered him, unable to do more, on the American coast, than to give some temporary relief, and to act on the defensive.—No
one

company, it excludes every thing else from my thoughts when alone, we have been deceived, and that principally by ourselves, we have deceived others unintentionally I charitably believe.

One at that time, could foresee, or rationally presume, First, That the Count de Grasse, would leave, that immensely valuable fleet, to remain in port, for want of a convoy, and take every French ship of war in the West-Indies, with him, to the Northward ;—Or, Secondly, That Lord Cornwallis, after having made himself master, of all the sea coast, from the Capes of Virginia Southward, would fix on one of the most unfavourable positions, in all that country, to encamp, and fortify himself on ;—Or, Thirdly, That Gen. Clinton would suffer Gen. Washington and Count Rochambeau, to march without opposition, to Virginia ;—Or, lastly, That when the Count de Grasse, took his whole force to the Northward, several British ships of the line, would still remain in the West-Indies, and thereby give the French fleet, a superiority to the British.—As no one of these events could be rationally expected, or hoped for at that time, and, as without a concurrence of all of them, Lord Cornwallis's army would not have been captured, and the campaign of 1781, must have terminated as much against the United States, as by this singular concurrence, of improbable events, it ended in our favour ; it may with great justice be said, that the affairs of the United States, never were at any period, in a more critical, and dangerous situation, and every one who reads the whole of those letters, will see, that the mind of the writer, was deeply impressed with a sense of the impending dangers, and anxiously solicitous, with his countrymen, to take such measures, as appeared to him, the best calculated, to avoid them.

The British nation has fallen into errors equally great ; would to God this great tragedy of errors, could have a happy catastrophe ! It is in vain to blame our public managers, but it is wise in us to examine our present situation, and to weigh the probability of future consequences. Experience has shewn us that France is either unable or unwilling to assist us effectually, so as to drive the British forces out of our country ; judging from appearances, here I might conclude, that France is unwilling, as appearances warrant such a conclusion, but when the conduct of men, or of a nation is capable of two constructions, I would willingly adopt the most favourable—I know the inability of the nation, to assist us effectually, and they say, they are not unwilling. I ought to believe them, though I know it is certainly inconsistent with their interests, and with the safety of their foreign possessions, to remove the war from our continent. But to whichever of these causes we impute the continuance of the war in our country, the consequences will be found equally pernicious to us. If Great Britain is determined in no circumstances to admit the independency of America ; then so long as both parties remain inflexible, we shall continue to weaken, exhaust and ruin each other, and who will eventually be the gainers ? It is, I think time
time

time for us to enquire how our account will stand on a close; Let the contest close, when and in what manner it may—Will independent sovereignty, in the hands of a democracy, be a government under which our persons and properties will be better secured than they were before this unhappy contest began?—Will our commerce flourish more under independency, than it did whilst we were connected with Great Britain? This I know is generally believed, it is even relied on, as a principal source from which we shall reimburse our present expences.—The subject however merits an examination.—If the restraints formerly laid on our trade were overbalanced by the protection and encouragement given to it. If in a state of independence, that protection and encouragement must necessarily be withdrawn and our commerce with Great Britain and its possessions, become subject to all the duties and prohibitions laid on the commerce of other aliens and strangers. If our commerce with France and other foreign nations, must be subject to the conditions and restraints which they shall see fit to impose, (as must be the case,) it deserves enquiry whether we in our commerce shall become gainers or not. I have examined the question as thoroughly as I am capable, and am convinced we must be losers. We complained of England, for including America in
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the Navigation Act, and other acts of trade, but if the naval force of that nation rose in consequence of those acts, into a power sufficient to protect the trade of the whole empire; if the trade of America was protected thereby, could it be unreasonable that the trade of America should submit to those acts and regulations which were the source of its protection and security? We complained that acts of Parliament prohibited us from carrying certain articles of our produce to foreign markets, and thereby gave England a monopoly advantageous to her and injurious to us; but it must at the same time be acknowledged, that British subjects were generally restrained from purchasing and importing the same articles from other countries; so that if England made a monopoly of certain articles of our produce, she gave us in return a monopoly of her market, and liberty of re-exporting our goods if a better market afforded elsewhere; in this, the advantage lay evidently with us; a great part of the articles thus monopolized by England, were such as could have been, and were formerly supplied by foreigners at as low or lower rate than we could afford them. But the system of Great Britain being as you know to promote the commerce of her own empire in every part of it, not only restraints and duties were laid on foreign importations, but bounties given to encourage

courage the growth and importation of many of our productions, which otherwise would not have found their way to Europe; another complaint was, that we were prohibited the taking from foreigners, articles, which we wanted though not the growth or fabric of England; but it is well known that those articles concerning which so much has been said, formed but a very inconsiderable part of our commerce. Every one who has had an opportunity of comparing the manufactures of one nation in Europe with another, of observing the different modes and principles of transacting business, will at once give England and her merchants the preference. All the more solid, substantial, and useful articles are made better, and afforded cheaper there, than any where else, certain linens from Russia and Silesia excepted—and even those as well as the less important foreign articles, came to us, considering the drawbacks in England on exportation, nearly, if not quite as cheap, as we could have imported them directly. But it has been also objected, that foreigners were not admitted to bring their produce and merchandize into our ports, and trade with us; of all the complaints made by us on the subject of commerce, this appears to me the most absurd and groundless. The exclusion of foreigners from being the carriers for England is the corner stone on which its commerce and maritime power arose, and the principal

pal cause of the increase of our commerce and navigation; and if ever we should be independent, and at peace and should neglect to pass acts to exclude foreigners from being our carriers, we shall never be either a maritime or commercial nation. The Parliamentary regulations, and restrictions on our commerce were a principal cause of the unhappy contest between the two countries, and we were impatient under them, because we were apprehensive, that they were part of a system to enslave us entirely, and thus thinking, it was natural that we should exaggerate their hardships, and in all our deliberations on the subject, turn our attention to the restraints laid on our trade, without considering the encouragement and protection given to it; I do not mean to call in question the views or designs of any one at that period. I believe that others, as well as myself, had at that time but partially examined the subject, and in truth we know that too many of our leading patriots had little or no knowledge of commerce, its interests and dependencies.—I confess that on a more extensive view, and impartial examination of the subject. I think it evident that the restrictions which were laid on our commerce previous to the present dispute, were over-balanced by the protection, and various encouragements afforded to it by Great-Britain, but supposing that at the close of the war America remain independent, what must be the
future

future situation of our commerce? Will independency at the restoration of peace, give commerce such a spring, procure for it such new sources and encouragements, as are necessary, not only to revive it from the ruined state in which it now is, but to raise it still higher than it has been at any former period? Or will independency prove prejudicial to the commerce of America? This is a serious question, and the importance of it must apologize for the length of my letter. I know that I am writing to the first commercial character in America, but I also know your candour and love of truth, and therefore I venture to communicate to you my thoughts on the subject, which if just you will approve, if erroneous you will correct. America left at liberty will, I am persuaded, take, at the least, three-fourths of all the European articles she wants from Great-Britain. The superiority of the British manufactures, their conformity to our taste and habits; the generosity and strict punctuality of her merchants, and above all the credit which they can give, and which no other nation can, or will give, must secure to that nation, as great a share of our trade as I have mentioned. But how are we to pay for those purchases? Whilst we were part of the empire, Great-Britain gave a preference to our iron, naval stores, pot ash, flax seed, timber, &c. &c. and encouraged the importation of them by the bounties and by

laying heavy duties on the same articles from foreign nations. This will no longer be the case; we have no reason to expect to be even amongst the most favoured foreign nations in the British ports. We have imagined that Great Britain could not support its commerce, and manufactures, without our productions, and without our markets for a consumption of theirs; this has been asserted, in harangues and publications, many thousands of times, within seven years past, I confess, that I once believed it—but observation, and experience have convinced me, that we have been greatly mistaken.—Of all the articles furnished by us to Great-Britain, I know but two, tobacco and rice, which cannot be obtained as good, and as cheap from other countries. the consumption of Rice in Great-Britain, is very inconsiderable; and that of tobacco does not exceed twenty thousand hogsheads annually, on an average.—Other countries, indeed, can produce both these articles, at as low a price as America can, but the preference given to them, from America by Great Britain, has formerly prevented their being cultivated to any extent.—It is well known that the Island of Cuba, the Coast of Brazil, and many other countries, produce tobacco of a quality superior to ours.—That the Ukraine is capable of supplying all Europe with that article: its cultivation, it is true, is not yet carried to perfection there,

but

but as it is, Russia at this time exports large quantities of tobacco to France, and to other nations—The same may be said of many other countries respecting rice. Indigo is produced in the Southern parts of America, and in the islands, every way superior to ours. The productions of Russia, Denmark and Sweden, &c. are the same with ours, and in exchange for them, those kingdoms take the same kind of merchandize from England, as we formerly took; at best, therefore, we shall meet with rivals in the British markets on our arrival with our produce, and rivals in the purchases we wish to make there—But we are supposed to be Independent, and can therefore go where we please, but we cannot find purchasers where we please, and the nations among whom we find them may lay what impositions they please on our sales—The Northern powers in Europe, cannot become purchasers, for they have the same articles to sell—France wants but a very small part of our productions; it wants neither our iron, pot-ash, flax-seed, fish, oil, or, in short, scarcely any thing except about 24000 hogsheads of our tobacco annually—and some of our timber, and naval stores; and for the two latter articles, we shall find the same rivals in the ports of France, as in England; and in regard to the first, the most important article of all, the cultivation of it, advances so rapidly in Flanders, and in the Ukraine,

that those countries may soon rival us in the quality of their tobacco, and from the cheapness of labour, be able at all times to undersell us in France, and in all the Northern ports of Europe—We have no promise of a preference in the markets of France—nor the least ground to expect it—Spain and Portugal, it is true, may want our flour and our fish, if, contrary to all appearance, we should have any, of the latter, but they will want little or nothing else, and our trade, be it whatever it may, to the Southern parts of Europe, and into the Mediterranean, must at all times be exposed to the Corsairs of Barbary—Those piratical states, who pay little or no respect to the flags of the first maritime nations in Europe, further than they are paid for it, will hardly pay any to the flag of a nation, which they have scarcely so much as heard of, and of which, if they come to know any thing, they will know that they can in no case, have any thing to hope or fear from—We have protested against the African trade, but if we relax, or rescind our resolutions on that subject, without a marine to protect our commerce there, and without either forts, or factories on the coast, we can have no share of it—We cannot flatter ourselves, that we shall be able to reduce either Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Canada, or the Floridas; and if Great-Britain be obliged at the close of the war, to submit to the loss of thirteen

teen colonies, it is natural to suppose that she will exert herself, to make the most of those which are left her—We neither have nor wish for possessions in the West-Indies—We formerly had a great and increasing trade there, but how much of it shall we retain as an independent nation? If any part of the globe be dependent on us for our produce it must be the West-Indies—Five years ago we rated our importance so high, as to believe that from a suspension of trade with us, all the manufacturing towns in England would rise, or, at least, clamour loudly in our favour, through the want of employment; that Ireland would be ruined only for the want of our flax-seed; and that the British West-India islands, must perish by famine, from the want of our productions—But the experience of six years ought certainly to correct such erroneous ideas of our own importance, or we must have become incorrigible, even by experience itself—Not one manufacturing town in Great-Britain has complained for want of employ; Ireland has been supplied with flax-seed at (nearly) as cheap or cheaper rate than formerly, and has found sufficient markets for her linens—The West-Indies may have suffered but little diminution. These facts ought to convince us, that the world is not so dependent on us, as we have imagined, and by pursuing our enquiries we shall find that we are as much, or more dependent
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on our neighbours than they are on us—I am not writing to one that declaims against luxury, without any conception of its effects, nor to one of those, who talk a great deal about commerce, and of its benefits, or of its disservices to a country, without having the least idea of its nature, or of the extent of its influence, and power : I therefore may, without reasoning on the subject, venture to say, that the productions of the West-Indies, are essentially necessary to us, and that we can do no better without their sugar, rum, coffee, cocoa, cotton, &c. &c. than they without our flour, beef, lumber, &c. &c. Formerly as British subjects, we had the right of supplying the British islands with whatever they wanted, and taking in exchange whatever they had to dispose of—We paid no more duties, than our other fellow subjects paid, either upon importation, or exportation—We had a right of carrying to the French, Dutch, and other foreign possessions in the West-Indies, all our productions, tobacco excepted, and of receiving in exchange from them, whatever they could afford, rum and a few other articles excepted—The articles we received from them, were indeed subject to a certain duty on importation into America. But how was it then, and how is it now with the French, Dutch, and other foreigners, as to our commerce with their West-India possessions? It is true we were admitted into
their

their ports, but our flour, was a prohibited article, and only admitted openly, in times of scarcity. Many principal articles of our produce were in the same predicament: France, by prohibiting the free entry of our flour, into her islands, shews that she was in no fear of their starving without supplies from us. But what articles of their produce were we permitted to purchase and export openly in exchange? Molasses, or the wretched liquor which they distilled from it, only; all others, such as coffee, cotton, sugar, indigo, &c. we brought away as by stealth, and by the purchased connivance of their officers—Has France bound herself by treaty to give us more freedom of trade, with her islands than formerly? By no means—We are to be treated as the most favoured nation is treated; and the subjects of the most favoured nation were never better treated, than in the manner I have described—This favorite article of my countrymen, molasses, the only one of any importance, which we were at liberty to import from the French islands, was taken care of by Congress, in their first proposal to France, for a treaty. I saw the importance of it at that time, and flattered myself we had secured it, without any real sacrifice on our part, but Congress afterwards thought differently, and gave it up. We have not, therefore, at this day, any security even for this single article—Every thing rests on the general and vague

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terms of reciprocity, and of being treated in the same way, and in the same manner, as any, even the most favoured nation shall be treated. But it may be said, that the necessity in which the islands must be, for our produce, will at all times bring them to our terms, or at least to just and reasonable ones. Let us examine the subject attentively—The French islands can be under no necessity, of taking from us flour, or salted provisions of any kind; on the contrary, it is the policy of France, to prohibit them doing it, if so disposed; for by supplying her islands, with flour of her own growth and manufacture, and with all kinds of salted provisions purchased in Europe, with her brandies, wines, &c. she encourages the agriculture and commerce of her subjects in Europe, which is a prime object of every wise nation; as to fresh provisions, her windward islands only, can ever be in want of them, and at most, the demand is inconsiderable, and the business of supplying never was, in the best of times, a profitable branch of commerce; Great-Britain in possession of Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Floridas, can from those colonies supply her islands with every thing they want, at as low or lower rate than we can; wheat, lumber, fish, horses, and other articles, have for many years since, and before the war, been cheaper in Canada than with us, and West-India goods of every kind have been dearer; Great-Britain therefore

fore naturally must, and will shut her ports against us, as a foreign independent nation ; her islands will want nothing from us, which they cannot be supplied with, from her own colonies on the continent, and those islands produce nothing, which is not wanted either in Great-Britain, or in those colonies ; good policy must therefore lead her totally to exclude us from all trade with them. Our commerce in this most important branch of it, must therefore be confined to the supplying the French, Dutch, and other foreign islands, and settlements, with such articles as they will consent to take from us, and to receiving in return, molasses (openly so long as they shall think proper to afford it to us, free of duty) and such other productions as they may be pleased to connive at our smuggling.—Thus in Europe, we shall be either excluded from our ancient and certain markets, or at least rivalled in them, and we shall have no certainty of new ones, nor any security against heavy duties, and impositions in such, as we may be able to obtain.—New channels have been opened, for supplying Great-Britain, with the commodities we formerly furnished to that nation, and for consuming the manufactures, we formerly took from her. It was the interest and policy of Great-Britain, to promote our commerce, and fisheries, whilst we were a part of the empire ; accordingly she encouraged our ship-building by the purchase

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of our ships, or by giving them freight; but being independent, the reverse will become both her interest, and her policy towards us; her ports will be entirely shut against us, in the West-Indies, for the reasons already given, and our commerce in that important branch confined, as I have shewn, to the furnishing the French, Dutch, and other foreign settlements, with such articles as they shall consent to receive, and under such conditions as they shall see fit to impose, and in return they will give us molasses, if they please, free of duty. But their sugar, coffee, cotton, &c. will ever remain prohibited articles, so long as those nations are interested to make a monopoly of these articles in Europe, both on account of commerce and revenue, and it is impossible they can be interested to do otherwise; when France was in possession of Canada, Louisburg, &c. the government did not permit those colonies to receive sugar, coffee, or any of the productions of those islands, directly from them, but obliged those colonies to take them from France, charged with double freights, duties, &c. and can we expect that France will do for us what she ever refused to do for her own subjects? That she will grant us privileges which she never granted to any other nation? Can we expect that Great-Britain, resentful on account of her losses, and desirous of encouraging the colonies, which may remain to her in America, and
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which will be able to supply her islands with every thing, can we expect that she will permit us, to trade with those islands on any terms? It is repugnant to common sense to suppose it. Congress, you may remember, spent some months in debate about the fisheries, they acted the parts of the hunters, who quarrelled about the bear-skin—for England in the mean time drove our Allies, as well as us, entirely out of them; nor can France regain any interest in the fisheries, but by the sacrifice of some advantage which she has, or may hereafter gain. But how are we to come in for any share in them? It will be to no purpose to plead, that our local situation gives us a natural right to participate, and that we enjoyed that right from our first settlement, &c.—That we enjoyed that right with others, as subjects, and part of the British empire, is true, but we have separated from it, and appealed to the sword; the sword has decided against us on that subject, and shall we at the peace, have any thing to give, or to restore to Great-Britain, equal to the purchase of what that nation is almost as jealous of, as Spain is of her mines? Will France after having regained a share in the fisheries for herself, go still farther to obtain an interest for them in us? Look into the treaty between us, and you will find France and we acted a little like the hunter I have referred to, in our division of Newfoundland, and the fisheries; but

it was made on condition of a conquest of them, by either, or both of us; that failing, France is under no obligation to guaranty any part of them to us; and what puts the matter out of all question is, that it is not for their interest that America have any share in the fisheries.—Deprived of these, and of almost all the West-India trade, wholly excluded from that of Africa, as well as from the benefit of selling our iron, pot-ash, flax-seed, timber, naval stores, indigo, &c. advantageously in Great-Britain and Ireland, with few or no markets opened for those commodities, what resources will be left for our Commerce? No nation in Europe except Great-Britain, will give a price for our indigo, which will answer, Ireland can be supplied with flax-seed, and lumber, from the North, at nearly as cheap a rate as we can afford those articles. Sweden and Russia can at all times undersell us, in the article of iron, timber, ships, naval stores of every kind, pot-ash, &c. The bounties on tar, turpentine, &c. being taken off, we cannot send those articles to Europe, without an insupportable loss, and we cannot expect that any nation (like England) will give us bounties on those articles. In taking a view of the West-India commerce, I have said nothing in particular of the Spanish, Portuguese, or Danish settlements in America. I think you will agree with me, that as the two former
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have ever been, and most probably will remain shut against all strangers, nothing can be expected from thence, and that as to the latter, they are too inconsiderable to merit particular attention, even were they not nearly in the same predicament, with those of France and Holland, which you know them in truth to be.

These external difficulties, appear to me to be of themselves insurmountable, but they are not all we shall have to encounter, if we should, contrary to all probability, continue independent—Without a marine force, our commerce would be every where exposed to imposition, and insult, and we shall not probably be able to support a marine. In truth, neither our friends, nor our foes, can wish to see us a maritime power, but there will arise at the peace, and in a state of independency, other embarrassments, and burdens on our commerce. Our national debt, considering our ability, will be immense, and we shall not easily agree in apportioning of it, to the several states. This, and a multitude of other causes for dispute, are so certain, and so likely to be productive, that it will be miraculous, if we can avoid a civil war with each other, as soon as we shall be freed from foreign enemies. Heavy taxes must at least be laid, to pay even the interest of our public debts in the exhausted state, in which the peace will find us. We cannot think of lessening the principal,
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until the Continent shall have had some time to recover itself. But the interest of our public debt, and the expences of government in each state will (though they must prove heavy) not be the whole of our burthens. The civil list of Congress, including the expences of their foreign ministers, consuls, &c. will exceed all our former expences, public and private, under our ancient government. Commerce therefore will necessarily become the subject of heavy taxes, because the landholders who are naturally jealous of commerce, and not the merchants, will predominate in making our laws, and imposing our taxes, a large share of the taxes must however fall on the landholder, which will oblige him to raise the price of his productions, and this with the taxes on trade, will encrease it to such a height, that we shall find no market in which we shall not be underfold by foreigners. You, who are perfectly acquainted with the disposition of those, who form the Congress, and the Assemblies of the several states, know that it is very far from being favourable to commerce; their views are so contracted, that they never have seen, that agriculture and commerce mutually depend on, and support each other. The resolutions of Congress, in almost every instance, demonstrate their ignorance of the principles and effects of commerce; the non-exportation agreement (for which I must blame myself

self as well as others) was a fatal measure; it laid the ax to the root of our commerce, and our agriculture fell with it; that resolution shews what extravagant ideas we then had of our importance, we flattered ourselves that by shutting our ports, we should distress Great-Britain and Ireland, and starve the West-Indies, so far as to effect our purposes, but the operation of that resolve well nigh starved our army, and the poorer people, and brought distress to the doors of every order; unhappily but too many of our leaders are still buoyed up with the same wild, and groundless ideas, and when I hear men, reputed as the wisest and most enlightened of American patriots, advance that commerce is rather injurious, than beneficial, and that it would be better to have foreigners who want our produce, to come and purchase it, than for us to carry it to them; That the whole attention of America as an independent nation, should be turned to agriculture, and the manufacturing of articles of the first necessity.—When I hear such doctrines advanced, and by men whom America has been taught to look up to, and revere, and reviewing at the same time, the other circumstances which I have touched on, I become doubtful, whether our commerce would not suffer as greatly from internal checks, and embarrassments, as from external ones—but, my dear friend, we are very far from the peaceable establishment of independency, so far, that I candidly

didly tell you, that I think there is not any probability of its ever taking place, at least in our days, The nations of Europe, France excepted, are all of them against it, and none more so than Spain. France becomes every day more indifferent to it, but so long as we can be made their instruments for humbling Great-Britain, Spain will temporize, and France will appear to be in earnest on the subject; we are certainly the cheapest instruments they can find, to employ full one half of the forces of Great-Britain; forces, which, if left at liberty to fall on their foreign possessions, would soon reduce them, to the state they were in in 1762. But how dearly do we pay, for the services we are performing?

The powers of Europe, hitherto neuter, appear at this time far from being indifferent to the fate of Great-Britain, should any of them take part with her, the war will assume a different appearance, and our fate will become from that moment determined. I think there is a probability of such an event taking place soon, but my wish and prayer is for peace, and the re-establishment of America in her original rights. The present moment is unquestionably the most important, America has ever seen, we are now of more weight in the general scale, than we can possibly expect to be hereafter, should the powers of Europe, once agree, on the terms of peace, our assent will hardly be asked, and we should find it necessary
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to acquiesce in the terms imposed on us. The present opportunity ought therefore to be improved; England, it is true, has a formidable league at this time against her, but we find in ancient as well as modern times, that nations less able to resist, have been successful, against leagues still more formidable; I do not, indeed, recollect any one league, that ever came off victorious, over the single power leagued against. The cause is in the nature of men, and nations; it must therefore still exist in a certain degree, and I know not why it should not even in its full force. You will call this a political letter, against which we have often protested, I intended it only as a commercial one, but I could not examine the future probable state of our commerce under independency, without entering on politics, and I have tired you so effectually by this time, that I will take my leave with requesting, that you will make my most respectful compliments to Mrs. Morris, and by assuring you, that I am ever, with the most sincere esteem, and attachment,

Dear S I R,

your most obedient,

and very humble servant,

S. D E A N E.

Hon. Robert Morris, Esq. Philadelphia.

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A great part of the observations, contained in the foregoing letter, on the situation, of the commerce of the United States, under independent sovereignty, have been, already verified by experience; and it is worthy of remark, that as the first uneasiness in America, with the Government of Great-Britain, arose on account of the restrictions, laid by Parliament on commerce; so almost the only obstacle, which at this day remains, to prevent a restoration of the most perfect friendship, between the subjects, of both countries, is their jealousy, or different views of this object.—Neither party appears, as yet, fully to realize the state, in which their separation has actually placed them, with respect to each other; nor indeed can it be expected, that men, so lately *connected by the same bonds of law, loyalty, faith, and blood*, should at once bring themselves, to regard each other, in the light of aliens, strangers, and foreigners, whose future connections, and intercourse, are to be regulated, and governed by interest only; and that they have no longer, any rightful claim on each other, for commercial privileges, or advantages of any kind, or nature whatsoever.—Hence it is, that the proclamation, restricting the commerce between the United States, and the British West-Indies, to British subjects, and British ships, has been regarded in America, as an act of partiality, and even of injustice, though without that
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act, no commerce could have taken place, between the two countries, in the state, in which, their final separation, necessarily left them; And in which, (like as with individuals, who are strangers to, and unconnected with each other,) their trade and intercourse, must originate, solely from the wants, the superfluities, and the interests of both parties.—Several publications, have appeared within the last twelvemonths, on the trade of Great-Britain, and her West-India Islands, with the United States, and on the terms, and conditions, by which it ought to be regulated, and able writers have taken opposite sides, on the question, but it appears to me, that it has not been placed in its true point of light, or justly, and impartially stated, by any of them, though the public are indebted to their discussion, for much, and useful information, on this important subject; the principal arguments of both parties, have been too much in this stile, *we can better dispense, with your trade, and commerce, than you can do without ours.*—But commerce between individuals, or nations, is not to be regulated, by a principle, or motive, like this, but by apparent, or real mutual interests. The principal questions on this subject, appear to me, to be; How far it is for the interests of Great-Britain, to indulge the United States, with their former privileges of trade, with the British West-Indies, and to permit ships built, and owned in

the United States, to be purchased or freighted, by British subjects, in British ports ; there are indeed, several other points in question, but these two are the most important, and on them, opposite opinions, have been advanced. On the one hand, the strenuous supporters, of the navigation act, say, that no alteration, or repeal of any part of it, ought to take place, and consequently, that the subjects of the United States cannot, consistently with the interests of Great Britain, be permitted to trade, with her West-India islands, or with any of her foreign possessions, in their own ships; and that ships built, or owned in the United States, shall not be admitted for sale, or freight, in any of the British ports ; on the other, it is said, by those, interested in the West-India plantations, and in that trade, and by many who are engaged in, or acquainted with, the commerce between Great-Britain, and the United States, that the local situation, and circumstances of the West-India islands, are such, as to render it essentially, for their interest, and ultimately, for the interest of the whole empire, to grant to the United States, a free, and unrestricted commerce with them ; and that to permit ships, built, or owned in the United States, to be purchased, or freighted, in British ports, will not prejudice, but greatly promote, the commercial interests of this nation. The facts adduced, and the arguments urged, in the support
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of their different opinions, are before the public, and it is not my intention, to attempt, to an examination of them, but only to make a few observations, which may lead to the adopting of a mean, between these two extremes. And it ought to be observed, that in a negotiation, for regulating the commercial intercourse, of the two countries, (the British dominions, and the United States), one party, has no claim whatever, on the other, and that interest alone, must dictate; and, therefore, that previous to the forming of any decisive opinion, or to the coming, to any final resolution, on the subject, the particular, as well as the general situation, and interests, of both, ought to be impartially examined, and stated. It is well known, that the United States, produce a surplus of provisions, of every kind, as also of horses, lumber, and a variety of other articles, for which, no market can be found, equally near, and favorable, with that, which the West-India islands afford, and that in return, the United States, are in want of the production of the islands, to the full amount of their exports to them, and in particular, of rum from the British West-Indies, which article is not to be had, at present, in any quantity, and of a tolerable quality, from any other quarter; And although it has been asserted, that the British West-Indies, may be supplied, with the articles, formerly furnished by the United States, from

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Great-Britain, Ireland, and the remaining British colonies; yet it has not been denied, by any writer on the subject, that the West-India islands, by means of a free trade with the United States, for provisions, horses, cattle, lumber, &c. will be much more regularly, and constantly supplied, and at a cheaper rate, than what they can be, if that trade is prohibited, or too closely restricted; nor has it been pretended by any one, that the West India islands, can find in any other country, so extensive, and advantageous a market, for their rum, as in the United States.— Thus far, mutual wants, and mutual advantages, in supplying the demands, of each other, are indisputably in favour, of as free a commercial intercourse, between the United States, and the British West-Indies, as can be permitted by Great-Britain, consistent with the general interest, of the nation. But besides the articles of the produce, of the United States, wanted in the islands, they have also raw materials, to a large amount, which in the present state, of the population, of the Continent, cannot be manufactured by them, to advantage; a foreign market is therefore to be sought for, and this can be found, only in manufacturing countries;—In return, the United States, are in want, of the manufactures, of foreign countries, to a much larger amount, than the value of the raw materials, which they have to
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send abroad; their demand is nearly for the value of two millions sterling annually, and this demand is increasing. Great-Britain, being the first manufacturing, and commercial nation in the world, can give the United States, the best market, for their raw materials, and supply them on the best terms, with the foreign merchandize, and manufactures wanted by them; and experience shews that the Americans prefer the British markets, and manufactures to all others; and on the part of Great-Britain, every foreign market, for her manufactures, is of importance, in proportion to its demand, and to the value of the raw materials received in return; these circumstances naturally lead to the establishing of a trade between the two countries, on the most rational and permanent principle, that of mutual interest. It is undoubtedly true, that Great Britain, and her West-India islands may, by adopting of certain measures, and suffering some temporary inconveniencies, be supplied with the articles formerly received from the United States, from other countries, and to permit the United States, to supply them with those articles, in their own ships, and to enjoy a certain part of the commercial privileges, formerly enjoyed by them, under the British Government, will be a violation of the navigation act, and of some other acts of Parliament;—but it is equally certain, that without some privileges of commerce,

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with Great-Britain, and with her West-India Islands, the United States cannot pay for this amount of British goods, and manufactures, and although they prefer them, to those of any other country, yet without the means of paying for them, they must discontinue, or greatly lessen their consumption. But is it not for the interest of Great-Britain, to retain a market, which annually calls for near two millions, in value, of her manufactures?—It has been said, that there is no danger on this account, for that other markets may be found, but is it not good policy, for a manufacturing country, to increase the number of its markets, rather than simply to exchange one, for another, of equal importance?—The superior quality of most of the British manufactures, may command a market for them in every country, which has the means of paying for them, but it is but too probable, if the present restrictions are continued, that the merchants in the United States, will not be able, for some years to come, to pay even for the goods imported by them during the last twelve months only;—If the British West-Indies can be supplied from Great-Britain, and Ireland, and the remaining British possessions, in America, or indeed from any other country, with the articles, formerly sent them, from the United States, as regularly, and at as cheap a rate, as they heretofore had them;—and if those who
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supply them, will take in exchange, that quantity of rum, formerly consumed in the United States, it is evident, that the West-India planters, and merchants, can have nothing to complain of on this subject; but these are questions not yet decided, and the situation of the West-India estates, is such, as to render the experiment extremely hazardous. On the part of the United States, it is urged, that, as British ships are permitted, to enter their ports, with the produce, manufactures, and merchandize of Great-Britain, and of Ireland, their ships have an equitable claim, to the same privileges, in the British, and that the same intercourse ought to be permitted between them, and the British West-India islands;—the navigation act directly, and wholly forbids this, but the late proclamations, suspending in part, the operation of that act, with respect to the United States, admits the first part of this demand, in every article, except that of oil only, and rejects the latter, by confining the trade, between the United States and the British West-Indies, to British built ships, owned, and navigated as the act prescribes, by British subjects.—On the part of Great-Britain, the question appears to me, to be, if it is not more for the interest, of her commerce, and manufactures, to permit the Americans, to be their own carriers, to and from the West-India islands, and every other part of her European and

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American dominions, and to sell their ships, or to take freights, in British ports, than by a rigid adherence, to the letter of the navigation act, to expose her West India subjects to great inconveniencies, and real losses, and deprive her merchants, and manufacturers, of a great part at least of a large, and increasing demand, for their goods. It has been repeatedly demanded, what the United States can give, in return, to Great-Britain, for such a relaxation of the navigation act, in their favor, and it must be acknowledged, that the United States, by their treaties with France, and Holland, cannot grant to Great-Britain, or to any other nation, any exclusive privileges; But the subjects of the United States, being at liberty, to prefer the markets, and manufactures, of one country, to those of another, and as they naturally will give the preference, to the British, if they are not prevented by acts, and laws, from carrying their produce freely to those markets, and thereby become deprived of a great part of the means of paying for those manufactures, the question then comes to this, if the relaxation of the navigation act, or the privileges urged for, by the Americans, will not ultimately be, as much for the interest of Great Britain, as for that of the United States, and if on examination, this shall, (as I think it will) be found to be the case, then it is clear, that Great-Britain can have no demand, upon the Americans, for any thing

thing in return, for measures, as much for her interest as for theirs. It would require a large volume to discuss this subject, as fully as it merits, I shall therefore only observe, that as in the management and regulation of the trade, and commercial intercourse of the two countries, with each other, motives of interest alone must govern, so each of them, ought to examine, with the utmost attention, and impartiality, what on the whole is most for the general interest, of their respective countries, and not to confine themselves, to particular branches, or to partial views.

If on the enquiry, it appear to be inconsistent with the general interest of Great Britain to permit the Americans to purchase, and export from her West Indies certain articles of their produce, for instance, sugar, or cotton, or indigo, they will be excepted, in the general permission, and the same principle, must necessarily be adopted by the United States.—This can afford no just grounds for complaint, on either side. Sugar, cotton, and indigo, are almost the only articles of West India produce, which Great Britain can wish to make a monopoly of—the United States are in no want of indigo, and their consumption of cotton, has ever been inconsiderable, and it is agreed by all the writers, on this subject, that the Americans can purchase sugar much cheaper in the French, Dutch

and Danish Islands, than in those of the English. The articles of salted, beef, butter, tallow, and candles, may be sent to the West Indies, at a lower rate from Ireland, than from the United States; hence it appears to me, that if an entirely free, and unlimited commerce between the United States, and those Islands cannot be permitted, consistent with the general interest of Great Britain, yet it is not a very difficult task to regulate it, in such a manner, as to be agreeable, and advantageous, to both countries.

The principal objection to such a system, is, that hereby Great Britain, must loose, and the United States gain, in the carrying business; On this Lord Sheffield has forcibly argued, in his *Observations, on the Commerce of the American States*. Though I must candidly declare, that, as far as my knowledge extends, the facts advanced by his Lordship, in that publication, relative to the imports, and exports of the United States, are justly stated, yet I can by no means subscribe to all the inferences, and conclusions, which he draws from them. But were I to enter on this subject, I should swell, what is designed to be but a small pamphlet published in my personal vindication, into a large volume; I shall therefore only observe generally here, what I have repeatedly urged in conversation with the noble Lord, that there is not the least danger, of the United States, becoming

ing the rivals, of Great Britain, in the carrying trade, or in a marine;—That although building ships for sale, and for carrying the goods of other countries, and for the fisheries, was the principal resource of one, or two, (at most,) of the northern states, yet the United States collectively, never were their own carriers; for though the New England States, carried their own produce, in ships built and navigated by their own people, and in some instances, became carriers for other countries; yet that was not the case, with any of the middle, or of the southern States. The tobacco, naval stores, rice, indigo, lumber, and other productions of the middle, and southern States, required by three times more tons of shipping, than was ever owned by them, or that could, at any period, have been put into that business, by the northern States; and that it is not possible, at least in the natural course of things, that the southern States, can for ages, if ever, become carriers even of their own produce; and that it must require some space of time, for the northern States, to have a sufficiency of shipping, even to answer this demand;—farther I have urged, that, as every one, who has wares, or merchandize to be transported to market, will naturally prefer the most cheap, and direct conveyance, and as the purchasers will attend only to the quality, and price of them, this branch of commerce, like all others, must, and will, regulate itself by the
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infallible principle, of interest, rightly understood; and it may be worthy of observation, that if the United States are not permitted to be their own carriers between them, and the West-Indies, on the presumption, that this would encourage the carrying trade, and encrease the marine of the northern States, to the prejudice of that of Great-Britain; The consequence will be, that the New England States, will turn their attention, to the carrying business of Maryland, Virginia, and of the other southern States, and by engrossing of it, more than make themselves amends, for their loss of freight to, and from the British West-Indies.

I may be told, that my present observations, are in part of them, different from those contained in the foregoing letter, for that I then gave it, as my opinion, that in consequence of the confirmation, of the independence of the United States, and of their final separation from Great-Britain, Great-Britain would necessarily exclude the ships of the United States from her West-India ports; but it ought to be remembered, that at the date of that letter, it was universally expected, that at the close of the war, the two Florida's, and East Louisiana, would be confirmed to Great-Britain; and that the resigning of those countries to Spain, makes the case extremely different, from what it would have been, had Great-Britain retained

tained them; and that I meant, in writing to Mr. Morris, to lay before him, not only, what would be, for the interest of Great-Britain, but also what would be in her power to do, respecting the commerce of the United States.

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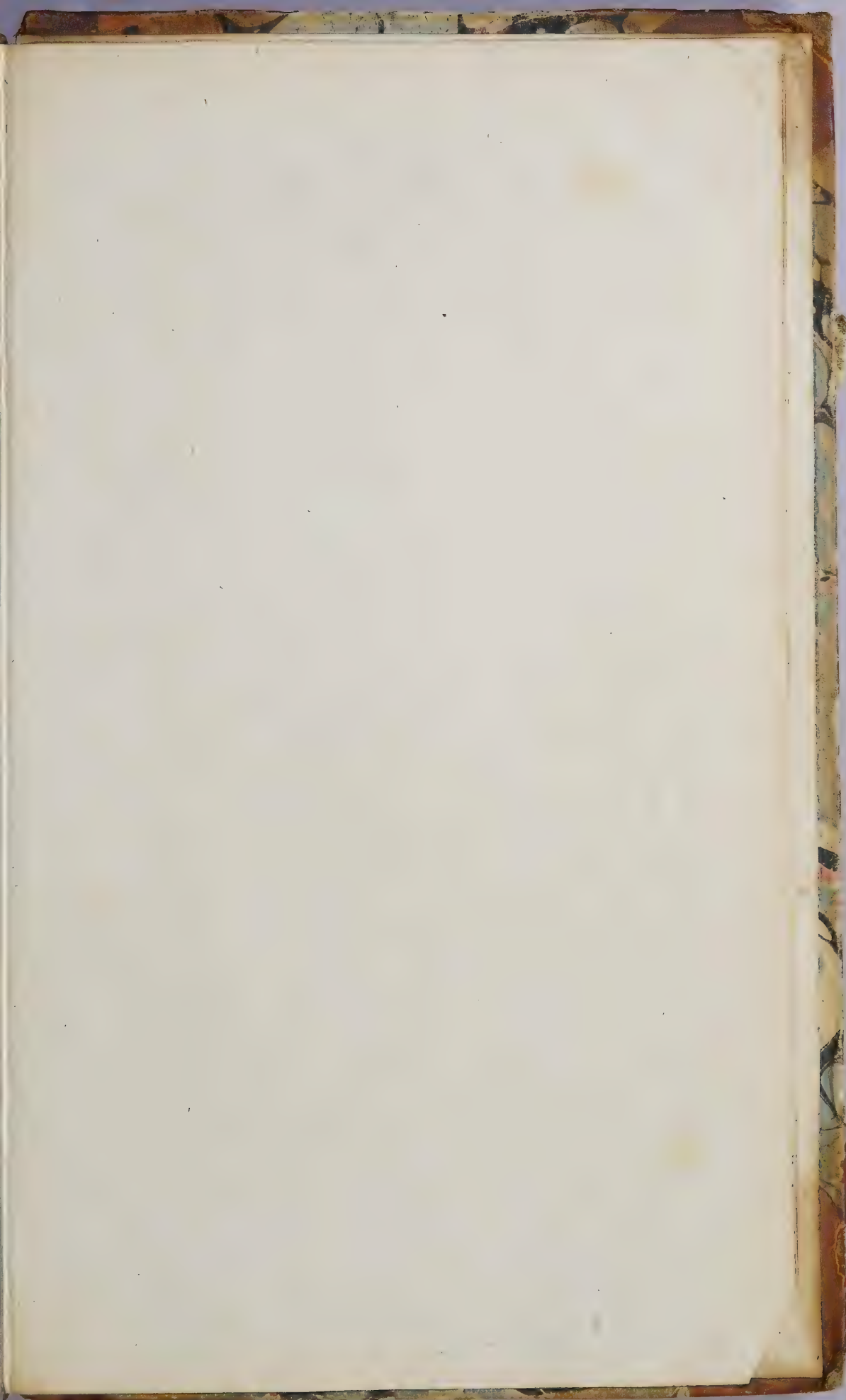
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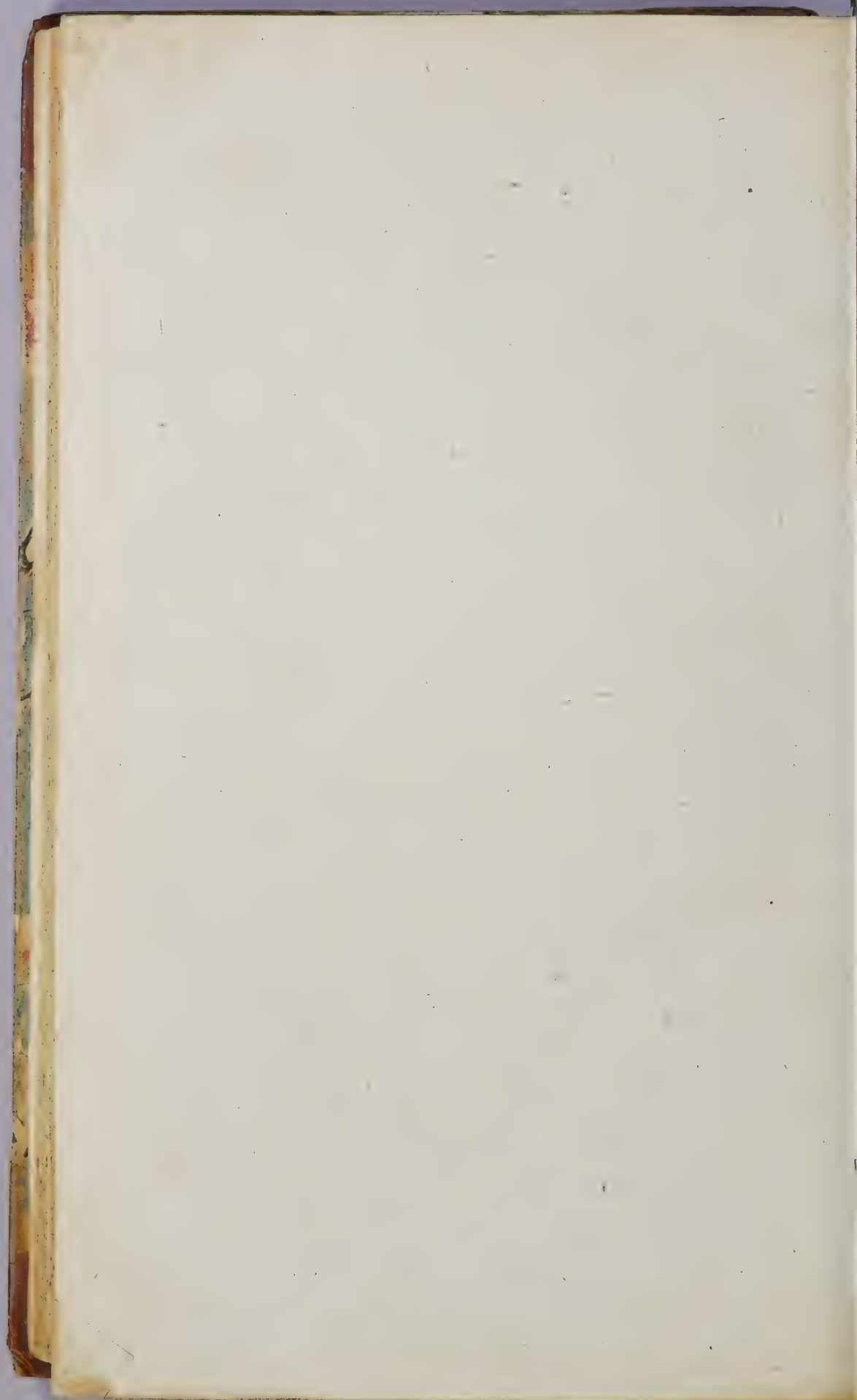
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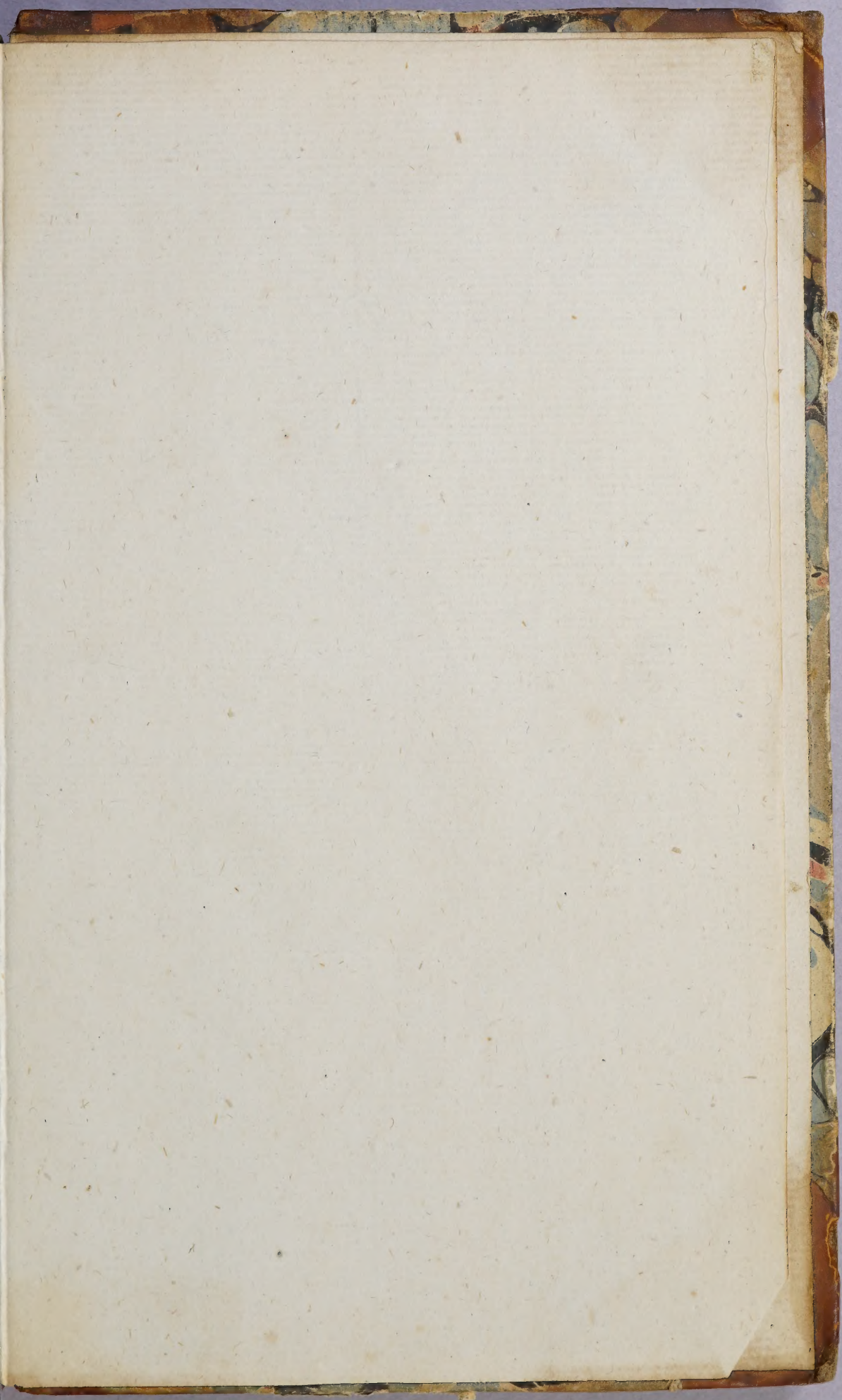
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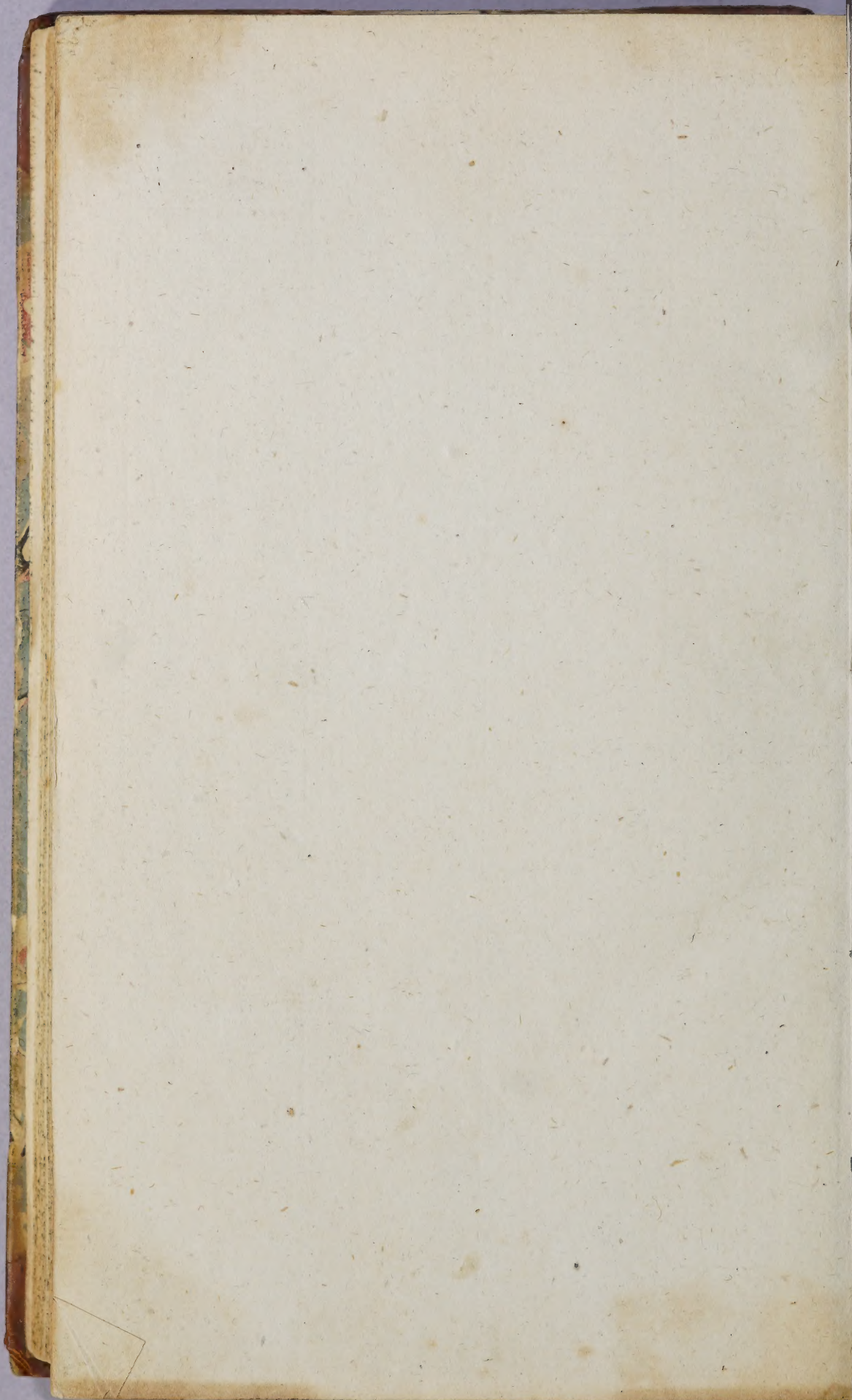
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